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SERMONS.

PARISH SERMONS.

BY

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SERMONS.

SERMON I.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING AND OUR WATCHING.

ST. MARK xiii. 37.

“What I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch.*”

ADVENT SUNDAY, the New Year's Day of the Church, has again come round. Again we pray God for “grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, that when His Son shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal.” Again we hear the Church's trumpet sounding, “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

Again we are reminded by the Gospel for the day, in which we are told of Christ's coming to Jerusalem, “meek and lowly, riding on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass,” that the day is impending when He will come in

all the glories of the Godhead, with His angels, on the clouds of heaven, and in flaming fire. Men will not then ask, "Who is this?" neither will others answer, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee." At the first piercing blast of the trumpet that wakes the dead they will know that the Son of man has come. Some will call on the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them, and some will say, "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." That all of us here to-day may be amongst these last, I now, as Christ's minister, and praying for His presence and grace, bring again before you the warnings and lessons of Advent.

The doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ is an article of the creed: "From thence," *i. e.* from the right hand of God, "He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." What do we confess before God and men when we repeat these words? We then say that we believe that That Person of the Godhead Who laid aside His glory and assumed our nature, and appeared among us as Jesus, the Christ, and was put to the most shameful of deaths, and who rose again and ascended, and has not since been seen of men—except in vision by St. John at Patmos, or by St. Paul on the way to Damascus, or by St.

Stephen when dying—that He, at a moment only known to His Father, ever impending, which may be to-day, or may be a hundred years hence, will suddenly rend the veil that separates between the seen and the unseen, and reappear.

We believe this because of His own words, “As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matt. xxiv. 27.) “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matt. xxiv. 30.) Again, we believe it because of the words of the angels when He ascended: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” (Acts i. 2.) Again, because of such words as “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.” (Rev. i. 7.) We believe then from these sayings of Christ and His angels and His ministers that He will thus come, as He has prophesied, personally, in the very body in which He ascended; publicly, so that every eye shall see Him; suddenly, in a moment.

We believe that this His second coming will be in the greatest possible contrast to all other visitations that are called in Scripture “*His comings*.”

First, He will come publicly, in all the glory of the Godhead; so that all men, whether they

will or not, shall see Him, as the three Apostles saw Him on the mount of transfiguration, or as St. John saw Him in the Isle of Patmos, and fell at His feet as one dead. In this respect His second advent will be in the greatest possible contrast to His first, when He came as a weak infant, and was laid in a manger in the outhouse of an inn. And He will also come personally: in our flesh we shall see God; we shall see Him for ourselves; our eyes shall behold Him, our ears shall hear the voice of Him who once called us to Him in accents of most loving invitation, but who will then speak as God spake from the top of Sinai.

In this respect, that He will come again personally and visibly, His Second Advent will be distinguished from all other events called His comings. For instance, He came in vengeance to destroy the impenitent and unbelieving city of Jerusalem; this was a coming in the way of providence; He came not in person, but in power. Again, He came to His Church on the day of Pentecost; this was a coming not visible but spiritual: He came by His Spirit. In the same way He comes to each individual soul when He reveals to that soul His love and His beauty, but this is also spiritual. And He comes in the sacraments, but here again His coming, though real and effectual, is yet spiritual. In all these He leaves not His throne. But when He comes again He will

rise up from His place: He will again visit in person the earth.

Again, we shall not go to Him, He will come to us. The time of each man's death has been said to be Christ's coming to that man. It may be so in a very limited sense, though I am not aware that it is once said to be so in Scripture. For when Christ comes it will not be to each one separately, as at death, but to all at once. We shall not pass to meet Him into the unseen world, He will meet us all gathered together in this very world of sight and sense before it is made new.

Again, His coming will be sudden. It will be as a cry at midnight, waking men out of their first sleep. It will be like the lightning, which always startles, no matter how black the thunder-cloud. It will be as the thief in the night, who approaches noiselessly and stealthily, and we are in his power. So, the Saviour Himself tells us, shall the coming of the Son of man be. Seven times does He warn us that He will come as a thief.

It is well on this Sunday, especially in these days, when infidel-minded men are studiously confounding Christ's second appearing with His providential or spiritual comings, to remind ourselves of the essential difference betwixt this and all others that can by any stretch of language or metaphor be called "His comings."

If such is the truth of the second advent, and if it is so revealed in Scripture, it must produce in those who faithfully receive it a corresponding effect. Let us now consider the state of heart and mind intended to be wrought in us by the doctrine of the sudden and ever-impending appearance of Such an One under such circumstances.

Our Lord describes this by the single emphatic word "*watching*." "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man shall come." "What I say unto you I say unto ALL, Watch." "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments."

Now let us dwell for a few moments on this frame of mind, for it is insisted on by both Our Saviour and His apostles with a force and a distinctness which show that it is one the lack of which no other can make up for.

Just as we are bid to exercise faith in Christ's atonement *because* He is the Lamb of God, and no one thing besides can take the place of *this*: just as we are told to pray in Christ's name *because* He is our intercessor: just as we are bid to obey Him *because* He is our king; and to come to Him *because* He invites us; and to partake of Him at His table *because* He says "Do this in remembrance of me," and no performance of other duties can possibly make up for lack of the least of these, so in like

manner *because* He will come again, and that suddenly, and when we least expect it, we are bid to watch, to wait for, to look for, to haste unto, His coming.

We do not fulfil this will of God then as regards our watching by watching over ourselves, over our own evil hearts; nor do we fulfil it by watching against Satan, though we have, if we would be saved, to watch against Satan, for St. Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant (*i.e.* watchful); because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about." No. The only watching that can fulfil the especial requirement of Scripture is a watching not against an enemy but for a Friend, a Saviour, a God, and a Judge.

It is a frame of mind, a disposition of heart, respecting Christ's present personal absence and promised personal return that we must seek by prayer, by very earnest prayer. It is the highest form of the submission of our inner man to God; it presupposes much grace in the soul, for the soul that looks for Christ's coming must be reconciled to God through Christ, or how can it hope to meet Him.

Again, the soul that looks for Christ must love Christ; that soul must look upon Him, not only as a judge but as a redeemer. "Lift up," says the Saviour, "your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Again, the soul that looks for Christ must love holiness, because

Christ's coming will be to rid His people from all remains of sin, and to change their present vile bodies into glorious, spiritual bodies, in which sin will be no longer possible. Any looking for, any loving, Christ's appearing, must also imply that the soul which does so implicitly submits to God, and has learnt, or is learning, to say with respect to its dearest anticipations or its most cherished hopes as regards this world, "Thy will be done"; for the coming of Christ will at once put an end to every anticipation, personal, social, or national, of the present state of things. It will, for instance, at once put an end to what men now call "progress," *i. e.* the material, scientific, social, political progress on which the hearts of so many are set. Not that men will not progress after Christ's coming; they will to all eternity be advancing in knowledge and love and happiness and power. How can the redeemed not progress—grow in all goodness and knowledge and power—when they see God Incarnate face to face, and hear His voice, and know even as they are known, and hold converse with God's unfallen sons who stood by when He created the worlds, and have ever since been at work in bringing to pass His most secret purposes? Who can imagine the boundless future either of knowledge or power or goodness, each ever advancing, that is in store for those who will have made their calling and

election sure. But this will not be the present progress, it will be according to different laws; there will be no evil mixed up with it, no pride of knowledge, no independence of man, no infidelity, no element of this fallen world. Those who love not Christ and holiness will have no part in it.

Now let us take an instance which will show us how preparation for Christ's coming is calculated to produce a religious effect on the soul over and above and distinct from the religious effect produced in the soul by its looking for its own removal by death from earth to heaven. Let us see how fulfilling God's will respecting looking for Christ's appearing both springs from, and is calculated to reproduce, a far greater contempt for things temporal and a far firmer hold on things eternal, in the man that realizes it. Let us imagine the case of two men, and both of them alive to God, and under the influence of His Spirit—let one of these take up with the popular belief that all he has to do is to prepare for the day of his death, when he will be summoned out of this world to meet Christ. Let such an one look at the end of all this present state as a remote event, which may take place after some hundreds or thousands of years perhaps, but which is in all probability so far off that he himself, and many generations yet to come, will pass away before it occurs.

Let the other, by God's grace, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, look upon Christ's coming in the way in which the New Testament sets it before us, as ever impending, ever at hand, and so ever to be both prepared for and looked for. Now observe the very different aspect in which the world will present itself to the one and to the other.

The one, the man who is ever religiously looking only to be removed from the world to heaven, will look upon the present state of things as one comparatively stable and enduring. If he has possessions in it, lands, houses, family, rank, he will look upon them as partaking of the world's stability. Though he is alive to the truth that he may be at any moment called to a better world, yet he thinks that what belongs to him will remain, perhaps till all that he has the smallest interest in will have passed away.

Now all this keeps alive in him, even though he be religious, a respect for the world; for men naturally admire and look up to that which appears to have elements of permanence, durability or strength. Even though he feels that his life is as a vapour, and that he may pass away at any moment, yet he cannot help feeding himself with the thought that others whom he now loves better than himself will for many a long year enjoy and do good with what he

leaves behind him, and others who bear his name and have his blood in them after them. And so, in spite of such a man's religion, in spite of his own preparation for death, yea, in spite even of his looking to Christ for salvation, he will have an anchor to a certain degree sure and steadfast in this world. It will be to him in a certain sense a rock on which he can safely build for others, if not for himself.

Now let us endeavour to contrast with this the effect which the New Testament truth that Christ is to be ever expected will have on the other religious man.

Let the other man realize by the power of God's Almighty Spirit what Christ says, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." "What I say unto you" (my disciples) "I say unto all, Watch." Or again; "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always." Let him, I say, by God's grace add to all his other Christian feelings the ever-abiding sense that Christ His Saviour and His Judge is at the door. Let such an one live daily under the impression that our blessed Lord seeks to work upon us when He compares Himself to a man who had gone to a wedding and left his servants with this particular charge in addition to the rest, that when he knocks they shall open

to him immediately. What would be the world to such an one? It would be to him as an inn in which as a wayfarer he tarried for a night. His duties in it, and to those with whom his lot was cast, and to the Church of Christ in it, would be the same as if it were to last ten thousand years, but his estimation of it, and all that it could bestow, as compared with the true Church of Christ sojourning in it, would be that of the apostle: "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." He would build, but he would feel when he built as one that was building on a foundation that might give way at any moment, and that certainly would at a time that he knew not. He would plant, but he would feel that he was planting within the range of a flood that would certainly sweep all away, how soon he knew not. Has he wife and children? At any time, at any moment, he may have to stand with them before Christ. Now am I overstating this? Is it not what the Holy Spirit would have us think when He says by St. Paul, "This I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that

use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away."

"The Lord is at hand." "The Judge standeth at the door." What if to-day we should hear the words, "The Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him"? Are we ready? Why should we not be ready? Everything that God has done, and every promise that God has given, is to prepare us for that day. For this God has given us his Son, for this Christ died, for this He rose and ascended, for this the Spirit came down at Pentecost, for this we have each been baptized, for this we have been taught God's Gospel, for this God has invited us to pray, for this Christ has invited us to come to Him, for this we have been confirmed, for this have we been bid to Holy Communion, that we might stand before the Son of man, and abide the sight of Him at His coming.

There were Christians in the time of St. Paul, respecting whom he thanked God that they had "turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for his Son from heaven.*" There are Christians now, you doubtless have met such, who, by having come to Christ, and by constantly looking to Him, and by seeking God's grace and Christ's strength in every way, and by self-examination and prayer, are prepared. In no boastful spirit, but with the truest humility, knowing their own miser-

able deficiencies, but knowing also that they have come to Christ, and are walking with Him and feeding on Him, they can say, "I am ready; were He to come to-morrow, or were He to come to-day, I am ready."

My brethren, may each one of us be able to say so too.

SERMON II.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE INSPIRATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

It is my intention in this sermon to preach to you upon the Holy Scriptures as a gift of God, and upon our duty because God has given us such a gift.

I shall take as my guide in opening out this subject the collect for this Sunday, with which, I doubt not, you are all familiar.

In taking this collect, however, I shall not speak of the general duty of hearing Scripture, or of reading it, marking it, learning it, or inwardly digesting it. I shall confine myself to what is the real prayer of the collect, viz. that we may *in such wise* hear, read, learn, and inwardly digest Holy Scripture as to embrace and to hold fast the hope of everlasting life which God has given us in Jesus Christ.

First, then, the text tells us, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” or, as the collect expresses it, God has “caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning.” This means, that when Moses, or David, or

Isaiah, or St. Matthew, or St. Paul wrote the books of Scripture that bear their names, they did not write of themselves, but God by His Holy Spirit filled their minds with all knowledge that was necessary to enable them to give a true account of the things they were commissioned to tell, and God guided them in some wonderful way in their writing, so that they put down what was most needful and profitable for us to know, and expressed it in the way best calculated to make that impression upon us which God intended.

Take, for instance, St. Matthew, God inspired him to write that history of our Lord's birth, life, and death, that we call the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

St. Matthew was one of the twelve apostles. As such he was one of the constant companions of our Lord, and so he must have had very much to say about Christ's life, miracles, and discourses; but when he wrote his gospel he was not left to his mere memory to put down what he remembered, and to make out what he thought a perfect history, but the Holy Spirit brought vividly into his mind those particular parables, or miracles, or discourses which HE wished to have most deeply impressed upon us. Now our Lord was most probably thirty-three years old when He was crucified, and the last three years of His life were spent in going about preaching, and

teaching, and working miracles. We read of His healing multitudes of people, we read of His preaching and teaching for days together, and yet all the events related in St. Matthew, from Our Lord's baptism to His ascension, if put one after the other, would not occupy one month of the three eventful years of His ministry. You know that St. John says that our Lord did so many things that "if they should be written every one the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Out of the immense number, then, of events that St. Matthew saw with his eyes, and out of the multitude of short sayings, or parables, or sermons that he heard spoken by our Lord, he was guided by the Holy Ghost to put down those only which we have in the twenty-eight chapters of his gospel. Now I believe that if all the words and all the actions of any one day of Our Lord's ministry had been written down as they occurred, with all their attendant circumstances, they would fill a gospel much longer than that of St. Matthew. Out of all this, then, the Holy Ghost guided this evangelist to write for our learning what we find in his gospel; and so with St. Mark and St. Luke and St. John. Ought not this to impress upon us very strongly indeed the unspeakable importance to our souls of the particular words and actions of Jesus Christ that are recorded in Scripture? and how by thinking over them,

and praying over them, till our souls are full of them, we shall be in the surest way of getting to know that blessed Saviour, the love of Whose heart they reveal?

Consider for a moment, my brethren, the Eternal Son of the Most High God, the Maker of all things, the Second Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, living amongst us as one of ourselves for nearly thirty-three years; during three years of this time exercising the most active ministry that was ever fulfilled by man; from morning till night preaching to the multitudes, or discoursing in private with the disciples, or disputing in the temple, or healing diseases. And the records of all these wonderful things we have in the Scriptures, particularly in the four Gospels.

The four Gospels, then, are no other than the fourfold life of God dwelling amongst men. They are the record of the life of the All-Holy amongst sinners, the All-Wise amongst the ignorant, the Eternal and Incomprehensible amongst the creatures of time and sense. Of what unspeakable importance to us, then, are the incidents of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, that we have in the four Gospels. Of all the innumerable wise and good things that the Eternal Son of God did whilst amongst us they are the things most useful for us to know; they are the things most

worthy to be received, understood, thought upon, and prayed over.

But this is not nearly all. We have not one but four accounts of Our Lord's life and death and resurrection. Now we should have imagined, seeing that four holy men were inspired to write about the words and actions of One who was always going about preaching and working miracles—we should have imagined, I say, seeing that they were all inspired by the Same Spirit—that they would have given us four altogether different series of events, but instead of this we have three of them going over pretty much the same ground. A large portion of St. Matthew's Gospel is repeated in St. Mark, and a great proportion of the incidents recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark we have in substance again in St. Luke.

Let us pause, and consider the lesson that we cannot but draw from this. We read of our Lord usually speaking to the multitudes in parables. In one place we are told, "Without a parable spake He not unto them." It is very probable then, more likely than not, that our Lord during the time of His public ministry spake above a thousand parables; very probably, if the truth was known, many more; of all these we have about thirty given in the Gospels. These, then, are the most im-

portant for us to know. Take one of these, the parable of the Sower. Instead of this parable being recorded only once, we have it three times over. In each of the three first Evangelists we have slightly different versions of it. Now I dare say that if we had had to choose for ourselves we should rather have had only one version of this parable, and we should have preferred having two other parables of the Lord whom we love which have not come down to us in the place of one three times repeated. But God, you see, has evidently seen it best to give us, not three separate parables, but three versions of the same. By this how very deeply and earnestly has He impressed upon us the lessons taught by this similitude. Oh, then, have we all of us heard it; heard it, that is, with the ears of the heart? have we marked it, learnt it, inwardly digested it? If we have done so we have learnt and digested some very fruitful and some very awful lessons. We have learnt and inwardly digested that the truths of God's word that we hear read and preached are the seed of eternal life in our souls; that this seed is sown broadcast over the hearts of men in thousands upon thousands of congregations of Christians every Sunday; that the reason that it produces in so many not only no fruit, but no appearance of life at all, is because Satan and his angels are so actively at work in each

congregation, and in the heart of each particular soul, to catch away the word sown; that when the seed is sown and springs up above the ground, that is, when men show some signs of being influenced by divine things, even then, in a great many, it withers away, the ground of their hearts being so shallow; again, in many, many more cases, those good things of this world that we so run after and have such anxiety about, choke the word, and only in a few does it bring forth the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Now such is reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting the parable of the Sower. You read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the parable when you really look upon the word of God as the seed of eternal life, when you continually examine yourself as to what sort of hearer you are, when you take heed how you hear, when you pray God to deepen the ground of your heart, and when you faithfully examine yourself as to the effect of the world and its good things upon your soul.

We have taken a parable; let us now take one of our Lord's miracles. Our Lord, from all that we can gather from Scripture, worked multitudes of miracles of which we have no account in the four Gospels. Now of all the wonderful things which He did, what is the one that apparently the Holy Spirit would have us most careful in reading, marking, learning,

and inwardly digesting? Unquestionably the feeding of the multitudes with the few loaves and fishes. For we have two miracles of miraculous feeding, in all their leading features the same, only in one case it is Our Lord feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, in the other four thousand with seven and a few small fishes. We have the first of these two brought before us by each of the four Evangelists, we have the second by two out of the four, so in fact we have six different records of what is nearly one and the same miracle. Now surely this is a very loud call to us to take notice. In the room that is taken up in the pages of the Evangelists by this oft-repeated story of almost one and the same thing, we might have had six entirely different stories or incidents of Our Lord's wonder-working power; and yet the Holy Spirit in His unsearchable wisdom has withheld the pens of the Evangelists from giving to us six wonderful works that we do not know out of the thousands that Our Lord performed, and has made them repeat substantially the same story six times.* There must be something in it to mark, learn, and digest, and what that is it is not hard to conjecture. We cannot read over the account of this miracle without thinking of Our

* Matt. xiv. 15, xv. 32; Mark vi. 35, vii. 1; Luke ix. 13; John vi. 5.

Lord as the great nourisher of the souls of His people ; feeding them first with His doctrine, then with His body and blood. We cannot read over these accounts without our minds reverting to the sacramental feast that Christ spreads for His people. We cannot help thinking of Him being present at every celebration of the Lord's Supper, and feeding His Church through the hands of His ministers as He fed the multitudes through the hands of His disciples.

Again, we have many other of our Lord's miracles three times recorded, *i. e.* in each of the three first Evangelists. We have the stilling of the tempest thrice written for our learning ; we have the demons cast out of the man who dwelt among the tombs three times recorded ; so with the raising of Jairus's daughter ; so with the woman coming and touching the hem of Christ's garment ; so with the walking on the sea ; so with the healing of the man with a withered hand ; so with the opening of the eyes of the two blind men by the wayside. Now when by God's special inspiration, instead of having in each Evangelist things entirely new, we have the same things repeated, it is as if God said to us, Take note ; mark well these things that My Son has done ; look to Him as One stilling the most angry passions ; look to Him as casting out the most inveterate lusts ; look to Him as opening the eyes of the

understanding ; look to Him as raising the dead in trespasses and sins.

But if God would have us read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the lessons that are thus repeated, how much more earnestly and emphatically does He call upon us to realize the great closing scene itself—the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus. Blessed be His Holy Name, we cannot think of His Son except as One Crucified and Raised again. He is born to be crucified for sinners. We feel that through all His life He had the cross before Him. And when we come to read of His being betrayed, and condemned, and scourged, and crucified, we feel assured that His work, His one work, was the reconciling of the world to God. As we read over St. Matthew, and St. Mark, and St. Luke, and St. John, giving all the same account, we hear St. John the Baptist crying out from his very tomb, “Behold the Lamb of God!” When we read of Pilate saying “Behold the man!” we can scarce think that they are Pilate’s words. It seems as if God Himself says, “Behold the man!” Yes, the blessed Lord who has caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning has so caused them to be written that we cannot think of Jesus except as One Crucified and Raised again.

All things so point to the cross, all Our

Lord's life so leads to the cross, that we cannot think of Jesus except as One Who was once in our stead upon the cross.

Do we think of the manger at Bethlehem? we think that He who lays there will be crucified. Do we see Him baptized in Jordan? we think of another baptism that yet awaited Him. Do we read of His choosing His Apostles? we know that one will betray Him to be crucified; and we cannot think of the tomb in which He was laid except as one that will shortly be empty; and we cannot think of His resurrection without having our minds carried on to His ascension. He died—He rose again—He appeared first to one disciple, then to another, then to ten at once, then to eleven, and He ascended.

Now why are we thus obliged to think of God's Son, first as an infant with His mother and Joseph, then as baptized and the Dove hovering over Him, then as going about for a short space preaching and teaching, and evil men opposing Him fiercely, and all leading to the judgment hall and the cross and the tomb, and the resurrection, and the appearance as of a spirit, and yet no spirit, and the ascension? Why this image of Christ born, Christ baptized, Christ tempted, Christ healing, Christ teaching, Christ condemned, Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ ascended? Why do we thus think of Christ when we think of the Bible and what is in it, or when we

hear the name of Christ mentioned? Because God intended it. God has so caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning, that He to Whom the law and the prophets and the evangelists and the apostles testify always flashes across our minds as thus Incarnate, Crucified, Risen, Ascended. So that, speaking after the manner of men, we cannot but thus think of Christ. And why did God thus intend us to think of His Son? In order that thus thinking of Him we may really and truly and with our hearts believe in Him, for to believe in Him as doing all this and suffering all this for us is our life.

So that if we read God's word, we cannot in the nature of things fail to see Christ there—Christ enthroned on the cross. For, as I said, God has so caused all Holy Scripture to be written that all in them points to the cross of Christ. It is the one event of Scripture. Holy Scripture says nothing about the creation of the world compared to what it says about the cross of Jesus Christ, and this because in the cross and resurrection, that can never be separated from it, we have the blessed hope of everlasting life which God has given us in His Son.

Well, then, my beloved, have we so heard, read, marked, learnt and inwardly digested Holy Scripture as to have in very deed embraced the hope of everlasting life there set forth?

This is the end of all Scripture. This is the end of every sermon, this is the end of every sacrament, that we should first embrace the hope of everlasting life which God has given us in his Son, and then hold it fast after we have embraced it. Only think of men having the Bible in their houses, hearing God's word in church, hearing it applied and expounded from the pulpit, and yet, because they will not come to Christ, and forsake sin, having no hope, no real good hope of eternal life.

Let it not be so with any one of us! We glory that we have the Scriptures in our own tongue, we glory in an open Bible. What is the use of this unless we have embraced and are holding fast The One Hope set before us in the Bible? Oh, let ours be the words of the ancient hymn:—

Whilst on the cross Thy latest breath
Thou drawest in the pains of death,
Teach us, O Christ, our eyes to raise,
And fix on Thee our steadfast gaze.

Thou, by Thy Cross, Thy saints dost mould;
Thou, by Thy Cross, Thy love hast told;
Thou, by Thy Cross, hast healing given;
Thou, by Thy Cross, hast opened heaven.

So from Thy Cross, as from a throne,
Thou dost command the world alone;
Uplifted on the accursed tree,
Thou drawest all men unto Thee.

Hail, Jesus! Thou Whose graces shower
Upon our lives all cleansing power,

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We stand beneath Thy Cross. We would
Be sprinkled with Thy Precious Blood.

To Thee Who gavest Thine Only Son,
To Thee Who hast the victory won,
To Thee, Co-equal Spirit, be
Glory and praise eternally.*

And if we have thus embraced the hope of everlasting life that God has given in Scripture, are we holding it fast? For as we embrace the hope of everlasting life by truly believing in Jesus, so by looking to Him as our perpetual high priest, our intercessor, our example, and our judge, we hold it fast; as the Apostle says, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

* Translation of ancient hymn, "Dum, Christe, confixus cruci," in Chope's collection.

SERMON III.

NONE BUT CHRIST TO BE LOOKED FOR

ST. MATTHEW xi. 8.

“Art Thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”

THESE are the words of a great saint, one of the greatest of saints, one of whom our Lord witnessed, that of those born of women there never had arisen a greater than he. He had been sent to prepare the way of the Saviour. He had been commissioned to point to a meek and humble man, who in no respect appeared at first sight to differ from those about Him, and to say of Him, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” By and by the faith of this servant of God was put to the test. He was cast into prison, and as he lingered there, apparently unnoticed by Him to whom he had borne witness, his faith began to fail. “If this is the Messiah,” he thought within himself, “why does He not assert his claim in such a way that all the world should at once acknowledge Him? If He be the Messiah, why does He keep us in doubt? Let Him say plainly who He is.” So he sends from his dungeon two of his disciples with the question, “Art Thou he

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that should come, or do we look for another?" Art Thou the long-promised deliverer, the desire of all nations, the child on whose shoulder is to be the government, or do we look for another? Art Thou only like myself, a precursor, a forerunner of some still greater deliverer?

Jesus sends him an answer, "Go and show John *again* those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them, *and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*"

I think that these last words are decisive as to the purpose for which St. John the Baptist sent his disciples to Our Lord. The passage has been frequently interpreted as if St. John's faith had not wavered in the least, but that he sent his disciples in order that *their* faith might be established by seeing the miracles that Jesus wrought. But is there any extraordinary difficulty in supposing the faith of any saint at times to waver? Abraham's faith wavered. Not that it failed ever, but it showed that after all, no matter how divine its origin, it was still human faith. So did St. Peter's: so did that of the rest of the Apostles. Why, then, should we suppose that St. John the Baptist's was perfectly unwavering? I cannot help thinking, then, that this message

of the Saviour was to St. John himself, and intended for the strengthening and confirming of his faith. I believe that St. John was, as our Lord said, no reed shaken by the wind. He was a prophet—more than a prophet—of those born of women none had arisen greater. And yet he had his times of weakness, when he, as well as his brethren, required a comforting and assuring message from his Redeemer.

Now let us look to the message that the Saviour sent to him: “Go and tell John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” This sounds to me as if Jesus said, What sort of a Messiah are you looking for? What do you expect Him to do? Do you look for a Messiah of your own imagination, one coming with observation, with pomp and power; or do you look for the one prophesied of, who should come to heal the bodies of men of their diseases, and the souls of men of their sins? You know what the prophets have foretold; you know that Isaiah prophesied of the great anointed of God, that “the Lord had anointed him to preach good tidings to the meek” (or poor). You know that the same prophet, in speaking of the times of the Messiah, prophesied that God will come and save, and that the sign of His coming

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should be, that "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." You have heard how I do, and do abundantly, all these things. You have heard how My Father is present with Me to heal, so that every form of human suffering vanishes at My touch. You have heard how even the grave has to give up its prisoners at My word. You have heard how the poor have the gospel preached to them. You have heard with what power and efficacy I bring home to the poor the chief consolations of God, namely, the forgiveness of sins, the favour of God, the life everlasting, and all its joys; the blessedness of suffering and privation, if sanctified by the Spirit that God is ever ready to give. Go, and show John these things, and he will see that He who does these things must be the Christ of God; *for there can be nothing beyond these things*: no man can do greater things than these, or do these things as I do them. If, then, God has given it to you, as He has done, to bear witness to Me as the Christ, and if I have these marks of the Christ that was to come, waver not for a moment as regards My mission from My Father. "Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me." Blessed is he that shall believe in Me,

and cleave to Me, even though for the present I hide My glory in weakness, and show Myself only to faithful hearts.

The key, then, to this incident is, that St. John's faith wavered because the Saviour delayed the manifestation of Himself as he expected. The Saviour reassures him by showing him that He had all the marks of the Messiah that St. John had a right from his knowledge of the prophets to expect; that He did works, and so did them that there could be no doubt of His divine mission, and that men must trust in Him though in humiliation, and though His outward circumstances might be otherwise than what they expected, till the time appointed of The Father.

From this question thus asked by the Baptist, and from our Lord's answer, we learn this, that the One Great Remedy for all the evils of human nature has been given, and that no other remedy for sin and sorrow is to be looked for till the present scene vanishes away, and time is swallowed up in eternity.

Till the time of Christ the whole unredeemed world was waiting for some one to *come*; some great deliverer was looked for. We have the word of a heathen author to assure us, that throughout the whole of the East men were in expectation of some one arising who should have dominion. What amongst the other tribes of the East was but an uncertain dreamy

expectation, was amongst the Jews the "hope of their fathers." It was the hope that was uppermost in the thoughts of every man amongst them who read and believed the prophets. For to Him who was to come every prophet bare witness. He was to be the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. He was to be the seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed. Moses spake of Him as the prophet like himself. David sang of Him as the King set on God's Holy Hill, as the Lord whom God invited to sit on His right hand. Isaiah spake of Him as the virgin-born Emmanuel, as the child who should be called "Wonderful, Counsellor." Daniel, as the Son of man brought near to the Ancient of Days. Malachi, as the messenger of the covenant suddenly coming to his temple.

Well we know and believe that He came at the time appointed; and at the place decreed He was born. He came amongst us, He lived without sin, He manifested His divine power, He was crucified, He rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven. We know and believe that from His throne on high He sent down the Holy Ghost. He left men that He might return to them by His Spirit. We know and believe that in the fulness of His power and goodness He is now amongst us. We know and believe that men come to Him by faith, and are united to Him by one sacrament and

feed on Him by another. We know all this. We believe all this. We all acknowledge it all. We have done so twice this very morning in the solemn recitation of our creeds.

Let us see what we acknowledge by simply saying over our creed. We acknowledge that the Desire of all Nations *has* come. We acknowledge that the Redeemer appointed by the Maker of all things *has* come, and *has* redeemed us. We acknowledge that the Physician who only can heal our souls, because He made our souls, and knows of what they are made, He *has* come, and made known His remedy. We acknowledge that God *has* given the New Stock of human nature into which we may be and have been grafted. We acknowledge that the Living Bread has come down from heaven, that we may eat thereof and not die. We acknowledge too, that the Being who did all this for us came amongst men by a wonder far greater than the creation of the world. The Word was made flesh—God was manifest in the flesh. The Son of God became the Son of man. In a Man like one of ourselves dwelt the fulness of the Godhead. The Lord of glory was crucified. The Lord of life was made subject to death. The Lord God now dwells among men, and we are the very members incorporate of One Who is at the right hand of God. Now when we consider this, if we believe it all, and

have the use of our reason, we must acknowledge that there can be nothing further. If the world was to last ten thousand years longer, no one being can rise up upon it worthy (in the words of the Baptist) to loose the latchet of the shoe of Jesus Christ. If Christ is God Incarnate, and if He has come, and taught and redeemed, then there is no room, no place for any else; there is absolutely no other to be looked for.

If what we have said, if what we acknowledge in our creeds is true, then there is no further *knowledge* to be looked for. I do not mean to say that men have got to the end of knowledge; so far from it, with all our discoveries we are only at the beginning. If the world lasts and men progress in knowledge as they are now, our children will know so much more about electricity and light and heat and magnetism, and such things, than we do, that they will think our present knowledge of these things mere ignorance. But with all these things we shall have no more knowledge of God till we see Him face to face at the last day. Till faith is swallowed up in sight we can have no further knowledge of His Divine Being than we now have. For consider, by the first coming of Jesus Christ we know and are assured in the most practical way possible, in a way that impresses the truth upon us more than anything else can, that God, whilst He is One is also Three. He is Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost. He is not a solitary being. He dwelt not from eternity in everlasting loneliness, but He dwelt from eternity a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So that the Father knew and loved and held converse from all eternity with the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the Son with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost with the Father and with the Son. Now what greater thing can we know about God? what can be added to this knowledge? and withal this, we are taught by the first coming of Jesus Christ the love of God to sinners, for "God *so* loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son;" and we are taught the justice of God, for God, in order that His mercy might reach us, spared not His Only Begotten Son; and we are taught the power of God, for what a stretch of power is it that God and man should be in all respects one person in the Redeemer?

No, till eternity dawns upon us we have nothing further to be taught about God. What we have now to do is to make good our present treasures of knowledge; for this knowledge of God will only be a curse to us unless it incites us to adoration and love. So that no further prophet can be looked for to teach us either the nature or the will of God; the nature of The Being who is more to us than all other beings whatsoever, The Being in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

And as no further prophet can come, so no further priest can come ; we can look for no other mediating high priest to introduce us into God's presence. We can be brought no nearer to God, The Governor of all, than we are now till He is pleased to introduce us into His own courts in the New Jerusalem. If the Son of God has offered a sufficient sacrifice for us, if no other than the Son of God presents His sacrifice before the Father on our behalf, if we have access to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, God and man ; if by baptism He grafts us into His Body, and in the Lord's supper makes us partakers of His flesh and blood, and so of His sacrifice, then there can in the nature of things be no other way of access. If we despise or disbelieve the way of access through Christ, then there remaineth no more sacrifice, for the simple reason that the greatest possible sacrifice has been offered, and the whole universe could not afford another like it.

And as it is with Christ as the Great Teacher or Prophet, and the Great Mediating Priest, so it is with Christ the King. He is set upon the throne of the universe ; all things are put under His feet. There is no one thing that has taken, or can take place in this our world, or any other world, which He has not foreseen, and ordered, and regulated, so that it should tend to the accomplishment of His own purpose and no other. All the

wonderful discoveries, for instance, of the last hundred years which enable men to come together so much more rapidly, or to communicate with one another so much more expeditiously; all the discoveries in agriculture, by which so much more food is produced; all the discoveries in medicine, which have so wonderfully alleviated human suffering, and have actually made the term of human life so much longer; all these have been given to His brethren by the Redeemer; they have all come to us through His hands. He has regulated the time at which they should be discovered, and the time at which (perhaps long after they have been discovered) they should be made available. All human progress (as it is called) has been absolutely controlled by Him. Every beneficent or wise change of government, every opening for civilization or commerce, has been brought about by Him. All this we must perforce believe and acknowledge, if we believe and acknowledge that article of the creed: "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

From all this we gather that there is nothing whatsoever that can ameliorate the moral or spiritual condition of man apart from Him. For the root of all evils that pertain to our race is the evil nature of the race itself. Do you suppose, for instance, that by bringing

men together by all the improvements of all the various inventions by which one place is made so much nearer to another you will permanently and effectually ameliorate the race? Certainly not; the men who are brought together are still the same; they are the same fallen beings.

The same with any system of government; no matter how you change your government, whether one man governs or many men, or all govern themselves, the governors and the governed are involved in the same evil nature.

It was supposed, for instance, a few years ago, that if men could be brought together to contend in what was called the race of civilization, that is, if they could meet together to show one another how well this man could make this, and that that, that people would contract such a love and friendship for one another that they would lay aside all their animosities, that they would "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; that nation would no more lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more." Well, men did so meet, and during the ten years since they met, there has been no quarter of the globe unstained by bloody and desolating wars.

But still an objection may be made, and I am glad to meet it, because the answering of it will lead to another matter of practical

moment. If He, the Redeemer, has come, how is it that the world He has redeemed is in the state that it is?

To which we answer, (and may God bring the answer home to all of us,) He has come to us, but we have also, (so God has decreed,) if we would profit by Him, to come to Him, and we have evermore to look to Him that we may have life. We may not look for another, and yet we may not savingly look to *Him*. God has given the remedy, but we must come to the Divine Physician and trust to the Divine Physician, and take the medicines of the Divine Physician, and persevere in taking them, and at His hands. Judge for yourselves what a load of human misery would be at once removed, if all men could be made to do this. Look at the misery and sorrow arising from alienation from God; the dark cloud at the edge of the brightest human prospect; how would this be dispersed if all men thought of God as Christ does, and this they could do if only they would be reconciled to God through Christ. Then look at the misery in families arising from disobedience to parents or superiors; how would this be done away if all children had the mind of Christ as a child, who, though God and man, was subject to human and fallible parents.

Again, what misery arises from intemperance. How would all this be done away

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if men in the use of the meat and drink that God has given us would be self-denying, after the example of Christ. How would the untold misery arising from the indulgence of malicious passions be eliminated if men only followed the example of Christ's forbearance and forgiveness and charity. How would the wretchedness arising from impurity and unchastity be all gone if men would strive to purify themselves even as He is pure.

And if these few things were removed, alienation from God, disobedience, intemperance, impurity, malice, covetousness, what real misery, I pray you, would be left in the world?

Yes, we are sick because we do not use the remedy; we are alienated from God because we do not come to God through Him whom God has ordained; we are discontented because we do not think enough of the eternal kingdom of Christ; we are ignorant because we do not learn and lay up in our hearts and minds that knowledge of God which we get through Jesus Christ.

He then Who was to come *has* come, and we do not look for another; but though we do not look for another, we look for Him.

There is no one else to come, but He is *to return*. When He comes again may He find us ready. May we all come to Him, may we all be looking to Him, may we all be feeding on Him, may we all be waiting for Him.

SERMON IV.*

LIFE THROUGH THE SON OF GOD.

1 JOHN iv. 9.

“ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

SATURDAY next will be Christmas-day, the festival of the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour. How are you going to keep it? Are you going to keep that holy day as the world keeps it, or as the Church would have you keep it? Now the world keeps Christmas-day in such a way as to dishonour Him who then came amongst men. There is nothing so good that the evil nature of man does not pervert from its right uses, and so it comes to pass that the holy days that the Church has set aside for the devout remembrance of God's greatest blessings are turned by the world into positive curses, for on these days we are bid to rejoice with holy joy because God has done on them something to break the chains of Satan from our necks, and on these days, careless and impenitent men rivet these chains firmer upon themselves by sensuality and self-indulgence.

*. Preached in 1858.

How, then, my brethren, shall you keep next Saturday? I hope and trust, and would fain believe, that you are not going to keep it as it was formerly kept, as a day of eating and drinking, and boisterous unseemly mirth. It would be better that you should have nothing to eat upon it than that you should so keep it. In the first place; are you coming to church next Saturday? I do most earnestly invite you to do so, for I remember that on last Christmas-day we had but a scanty number compared to our usual Sunday congregation. Be assured, that any person *professing to be a Churchman* who absents himself from God's house on that day, by so doing shows that he does not in the least realize or enter into the unspeakable greatness of the benefit conferred upon sinful man by the Incarnation and Birth of God's Only Begotten Son. He has yet to learn, he has yet savingly to apprehend, such texts as "God sending his *own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*," "Christ Jesus *came into the world to save sinners*," "God was manifest in the flesh;" "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him [the nature of] the seed of Abraham."

Do not mistake me; I can well believe that many a man who does not keep Church festivals, from miscalled conscientious motives, still believes in and loves his Saviour far more than thousands who profess to observe Christ-

mas, Easter, and such days. I am not speaking of those who dissent from the Church, but of those who belong to it; and I say again, that the professing Churchman who absents himself from God's house—and must I not also say from Christ's table?—on the day that the Church has ordained for the commemoration of Christ's birth into this world, knows nothing of what God has done for Him in the Incarnation and Birth of His Son.

Now if on Christmas-day we are to praise and glorify God aright for the birth of His Son, we must understand and lay to heart who He is whose birthday we keep, and we must feel to what it is that we owe such a benefit. The text I have taken will teach you this; make it, I beseech you, the subject of your first waking thoughts on Saturday next.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” In this text, the first thing that we have to consider is the love of God; but of which person in the Godhead? for in the Godhead there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Of which of these Three is the love manifested? Most assuredly the love of the First Person, the love of God the Father, for “in this was the love of God manifested, that He *sent* his Son.” Lay up this plan in your hearts, my

brethren, for many men when they exalt the Second Person and His love, dishonour the First. You often hear men preach what they call the Gospel, and so lay it down as if God the Father was all justice and severity, and God the Son all love and compassion; but here we have first of all the love of God the Father in sending the Son, and Christ says, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son." God the Father, then, as He is the Father of the Redeemer, so is He the Author of redemption. It is all from Him, because He sends His Son on His errand of mercy to this miserable world. He GAVE His Son to die for us. He, the Eternal Father, in some real, true way, parted with His Son for a time that in and through that Son He might take us to Himself for ever. Oh, brethren, do you know this love of the Father? Oh, believe you this love of God the Father? If you do, you will love, please, serve, thank, and praise the Father for this His love.

But let us look more closely into what the text says of this love of God. How was it shown, manifested?

"God sent his only begotten into the world." This is the great truth of our religion, "God sent His Son." How could He? The Son is, by His very nature and essence, *in* the Father. "Believe me," Jesus Christ says, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." And yet

God sent Him who was always in Himself, and must be in Him by His very nature. And then, too, He, the Father, sent this His Son *into the world*, and yet God's Son, in one sense, in one way, had never been out of the world. He made the world at the first, and He has upheld it by His power ever since. How, then, could He leave His Father, in whom He ever was, and how could He come into a world from which He had never departed for an instant since that world was made?

You know how this was; you have confessed it twice this very day, when you said that you believed in "Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;" you confessed it more fully still when you said in another confession, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds," "Begotten, not made . . . Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." You know, too, and you believe, the words of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, how he says, that "He who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man

He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

God sent His Son, then, into the world *as one of us*. He who had been from before all worlds with His Father, and so received the worship of the heavenly host, for thirty years and more left the place of His glory. The angels looked to where they had seen the brightness of His Presence, and they saw it not. He had left His place: He had surrendered for a time the visible manifestation of His power: He was now to be seen, not in heaven, but *on earth*; first a weak infant, then a youth learning a trade, then a working man, then dying as if He were a malefactor. In this was manifested the love of God. It behoved that He whom the Father only could give should be *given* by His Father—parted with so far as the nature of God allowed.

But further, the love of God appears in the world into which God's Son was sent. He who had no sin was sent into a world of sinners. He who had done, and could do, no wrong, was sent to endure wrong in a world of wrongdoers.

The Son of God was sent into a world at enmity with God, that God might be reconciled to the world, and the world to God. He who was by His divine nature incapable of misery was sent into a miserable world to partake of its misery, so that He might taste the

cup that we, His brethren, partake of through our sin. In all this was manifested the unspeakable love of God, that He whom He delighted in from eternity was *so* sent, into *such* a world. But for what end was He thus sent?—that we might live through Him. Now herein is a marvellous thing, that the one human being Whose birth we commemorate on Saturday next is the Life of the world. My brethren, how many of you believe this? how many of you have ever steadily thought about, pondered over this, that Jesus Christ your Saviour came into the world to be your LIFE? If you have ever believed this, you must certainly have thought well about it. It is not a thing which, if you believe really, you can forget easily, that Christ, born in a manger at Bethlehem, is *your life*. I dare say that you have long believed, after a sort, that He is your forgiveness, your atonement, your example. I dare say that you have long believed that He is your Prophet, your Priest, your King; but the text goes far beyond this. It says that He is your Life. God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world that we may LIVE through Him.

Now Christ is our life; we live by Him in two ways. By Him we live the life of God in our souls here, and by Him we shall live even though we be dead. Through Him we shall, body, soul, and spirit, live for ever.

I have no time on this Sunday to enter upon this latter. It is rather an Easter than a Christmas subject, so I shall confine myself to the former.

By Him we live the life of God here. God and the world call two very different things by the name of *life*. The world calls a life of pleasure and enjoyment life. When a man has lived to the full a life of pleasure, the world says that that man has seen life. Now God calls this sort of life death. It does not merely lead to death at last, it does not merely deserve death, it is death. The soul is dead. It is dead to that for which God made it, it is dead to that which Christ died to procure for it. But how can a man in the full use of his faculties be said to be dead? Because there is a life to which all other life is as death—the life of God. There is a knowledge to which all other knowledge is as ignorance—the knowledge of God. When a man is dead he does not stir; he is not moved if you set before him the choicest repast; or if you speak in his ear the most heart-stirring news, or if you cause to come near to him the forms and faces of those which while alive he most loved, he would give no sign that he knew them. And the impenitent sinner sees not God in His works, hears not God in His Gospel, fears not God in His judgments. And so to God—the one Being to be known, feared, loved—he is dead.

But, thanks be to God, all are not thus dead. There is life even in this valley of the shadow of death. There is life, and the well from which the life springs is the manger at Bethlehem.

Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this great thing, that He who is there lying in a manger is the Life of the world. He is the new stock of the tree of life into which we are engrafted, and in which we are to adhere, and from which we are to receive the life of God into our souls.

The life of God—what is it? It is to live as if God ever saw us, as if He ever looked upon us, ever regarded us. It is to live as if God were ever near, Christ ever coming, heaven ever opening, the world ever passing away. It is to live as if Christ's incarnation, Christ's temptation, Christ's agony, Christ's death for sin, Christ's resurrection for our justification, actually took place. It is to live, to think, to speak, as if our creed were true; as if we knew what we were doing when we begin that creed with, "I believe in God the Father," and end it with, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." To live the life of God, to have it in us, is to remember that in baptism we were grafted into Christ, and to stir up the gift that is in us if the fire of God's grace smoulders in the hearth of our hearts. It is to remember that the church is the house of God, and so we

must go to it as if we were to meet Him, and be there sitting at the feet of Jesus, and so leave it with His blessing. In one word—no, we cannot describe the life of God in one word, for the whole Bible describes the life of God. The life of God is to follow Abraham's and St. Paul's faith. It is to follow the example of all the saints as they followed Christ. It is to be meek and gentle under provocation as Christ was. It is to speak to God from our hearts in the words of David's Psalms; to say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It is to know God, to believe what He says, to accept what He offers, and to submit to what He lays upon us.

Now who live in this way? Not many perhaps, but there are some, more than we think, that have this hidden life, this blessed life—not in perfection, not in the full-blown flower of grace, but in the root. And how live they this life? It is through Christ. You have been brought to Christ in helpless infancy, and you have been gently led by the hand to Christ when young, or perhaps you have felt Christ's hand upon you when confirmed, or you have gone out of the way and a voice that you could neither mistake nor resist has called you back and you have turned to Him that called you—you have been changed, converted, renewed.

Anyhow, you have been brought to Christ,

and you have received life from Him ; you have come believing in Him very feebly and He has strengthened your faith ; He has increased your faith, you believe in Him more, and more, and more. And you come to Him not once, but habitually. You never pray, if you pray really in His name and relying on His intercession, without coming to Him, and you eat His flesh and drink His blood and have life in you. And so the design of God in sending you into the same world into which He sent His Son is now fulfilled partially, and hereafter will be fully. You live through Him. The Son of God, born as on Christmas-day, is your life : His goodness, His grace, His peace, His love, His Spirit, flows into you as really as the sap flows into the vine-branch from the stem.

But, my brother, is it so with you ? There are many with whom this is as I have described ; for I have merely described a sincere Christian, one who believes in his Saviour, lays his sins daily at the foot of his Saviour's cross, reads the Bible, prays in earnest, gives what he can for the cause of Christ's kingdom and the relief of His poorer members, watches over himself, and watches for his Saviour. Such an one lives, really lives, why should not you ? You say you cannot ; God says you may and you can ; He wants you, for He loves you, for "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His Only Begotten

Son into the world, that we might live through Him." If you are not yet thus alive, what does your Saviour say to you? He says, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life." If you are thus alive, what then does the same Saviour say of you? You are one of those of whom He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

S E R M O N V.

“UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.”

ISAIAH ix. 4, 5, 6.

“Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood ; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

THIS passage is a part of the first lesson for this morning's service. The sixth verse, beginning, “unto us a child is born,” is the most distinct and circumstantial prophecy in the Old Testament of the union of the two natures, the divine and the human, in the one person of the Redeemer.

But before entering upon its exposition it may be well to show its connexion with the two preceding verses ; this connexion, as these verses stand in our translation, not being clear. The fourth verse reads thus, “Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.” Now, inasmuch as

the sixth verse throughout relates to the twofold nature, Divine and human, and the eternal kingdom of the Messiah, it is evident that this fourth verse, which forms part of the same prophecy, must do so too. God, then, in thus speaking of "breaking a yoke," can refer to no local, petty, temporary deliverance even of the Jewish people, but to some universal, some eternal deliverance, commensurate with the divine greatness of the Being whose birth and reign is foretold in the latter part of the prophecy. The "yoke of his burden," then, the "staff of his shoulder," the "rod of his oppressor," can be nothing less than the power of Satan; the power of Satan over the world, as seen in the kingdoms of this world rejecting the true God and worshipping idols; the power of Satan over the race in keeping God's noblest work at enmity with Him through the sense of unatoned for and unforgiven sin; the power of Satan over the will, as seen in the dominion of sin; the power of Satan over the whole inner man by the expulsion of God from His rightful place in the heart.

God, when He sent his Son into the world, is said to have *broken* this yoke. How could this be, seeing that Satan was not driven back and foiled by the Second Adam till thirty years after, at the time of His temptation? How could Satan's yoke be *broken*, seeing that he had the "power of death," and death was

not deprived of his sting till the crucifixion and death of the Infant just born, and the kingdom of God came not with power till the day of Pentecost?

Satan's yoke was broken from off the neck of man by the birth of Jesus, because then God Himself took upon Himself personally the salvation of the lost race. He interfered then, not by a deputy or ambassador, but in His Own Person. The Eternal Son, who originally created the worlds and gave the law, after having become incarnate, appeared at His birth in the world which He had created, and amongst the race to whom He had given His law. Without ceasing to be God over all, He had clothed Himself with our nature, and had become one with us in everything except sin.

Now God is said to have broken the yoke from His people's necks by the birth of His Son, because when He commenced His work with a thing so passing all conception as the humiliation and incarnation of God the Word there could be no doubt that He would carry the work on to all its issues of grace and glory. Such a beginning was a pledge indeed that the end God had in view *must* and would be reached. It showed God to be indeed in earnest about His work if He *so* commenced it.

This is the reason why the Church lays such stress upon the *creeds*. The creeds tell us who He is whom God sent to save us

before they tell us what He did to save us. You tell me that Jesus Christ is a precious and a loving Saviour; that He is able and willing to save *me*. How am I to know this? How am I to know that the blood of one born as an infant 1861 years ago has power to blot out all my sins, and the sins of the world? I know that this can be, because I believe my creed. I first believe and confess that my God and Lord was incarnate and born before I confess that He was crucified and raised again. I believe that the cleansing efficacy of His blood is the direct consequence of the Divine dignity of His person. I believe that His blood must cleanse from all sin, because it is the blood of God's only begotten Son, who took our flesh and blood that His body might be broken and His blood shed for us.

Thus then by the birth we commemorate to-day was the yoke of Satan *broken*. The text tells us that it was broken *as in the day of Midian*. The allusion here is evidently to the victory gained by Gideon over the Midianites, as recorded in the seventh chapter of the Book of Judges.

The host of the Midianites covered the plain as grasshoppers for multitude, and God discomfited them by a small band of Israelites, who did not so much as lift up a sword against them. It was, in one sense, the most signal deliverance of God's people on record; for God

saved them, not by interfering miraculously with the laws of nature, as at the passage of the Red Sea; nor by sending an angel, as when He destroyed the army of Sennacherib, but God saved His people by one of themselves, and by means to all human appearance utterly inadequate to the end. Who would have thought that such a host would have melted away before Gideon and his three hundred? Who would have thought, standing by the manger in the inn of Bethlehem, that in that little one dwelt “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” so that God and man, the finite and the infinite, should be one in Him, so that through that flesh God and man should be reconciled, and life restored to the world.

But we must proceed to the next verse, the fifth, in which we find another allusion to a battle and a victory. At first sight it is difficult to make out the connexion between this and the next verses, or, indeed, to give a definite meaning to the fifth. “For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born.” When we consider that the sixth verse foretells that a child should be born who should be called “the Prince of Peace,” we should have supposed that the fifth verse would have been a prophecy of a state of peace, but at first sight it does not appear to be so.

I believe, however, that the meaning of the original Hebrew in which this verse was first written is much more conformable to the meaning of the sixth verse than appears from our translation. You are of course aware, that when a word not in the original text is inserted in our translation to make up the sense, it is inserted in italics. Now if we take away the word "is" from the first clause of the verse, and which has no word answering to it in the original, and in our translation is in italic letters, the verse will run thus: "For every battle of the warrior with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this," or rather *even this*—the same word standing for "*and*" and "*even*"—"even this shall be for burning and fuel of fire, for unto us a child is born."* In this way the fifth and sixth verses correspond with one another, and the fifth is simply a prophecy of the total destruction, as by fire, of all that has to do with war; and so is but another way of expressing the glorious truth that in the times when the Christ shall take to Him His great power and reign, men shall "beat their swords into ploughshares and their

* The interpretation given above is, as to its sense, that of some of the first Hebrew scholars, Jewish or Rabbinical, German and English. The literal translation of the verse is, "For every sandal of the sandaled in the tumult, [*i.e.* of battle,] and [the] garment rolled in blood, and it shall be for burning, fuel of fire.

spears into pruning-hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” And surely, beloved, the yoke of Satan, the rod of the oppressor, shall in very deed be broken if God consumes as fuel the lusts which war in our members—the roots of bitterness from which spring wars and fightings—the passion for fame which spreads desolation amongst nations, the malice and envy and heartburning and evil surmising that carry war into the family and even into the Church, and divide and rend asunder those whom God has made one, both in the flesh and in Christ. All these shall be for burning and fuel of fire. We know not how or when, but assuredly they shall be, for “unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”

Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given! What sounds of exultation! What a “jubilate” have we here! Such would be the joyous cry that rang through the tents of Abraham on the day that God gave His faithful servant the son in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. And yet when He, the greater than Isaac, came amongst us there were none to recognise Him, none to bid Him welcome. Angels might sing “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,” but who was there of His brethren, of His Church, to say, “Unto *us* a child is born.”

Ah, we here are not the Church—we are but

a part, a very small part, and they who are in God's safe keeping, the spirits of the just made perfect, waiting in sure and certain hope in the paradise assigned to them by God till death and the grave give up their dead, these would know what had come to pass; and what heart dare picture to itself the tumult, the stir of joy, in that great congregation when the news is brought, that to *them* a child is born through whom Abraham shall yet inherit the land, and David's soul not be left in the unseen place, and Job, though worms have destroyed his body, shall yet in his flesh see God?

"And the government shall be upon his shoulder," *i. e.* "all power shall be given to Him in heaven and in earth;" "He shall have the keys of death and hell;" "All things shall be put under His feet."

This, this present time is the day of His power. My brethren, may God now on this holy day bring this question that I now ask home to each soul here. Have you, for yourselves, each one in his or her own person, made proof of this His power? Your bodies, your souls, your life, your death, your past, your present, your future, are all in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter. Have you brought your sins to Him to be blotted out and eradicated? your wills to Him to be subdued? your hearts to Him to be renewed? your souls to be taken into His holy keeping?

your life to be animated, your walk to be guided, by His Spirit? It is for you that the government is on His shoulder. For you He was incarnate, for you He was born, for you He died, for you He rose again, for you He ascended, for you He reigns. Remember that, as regards each one of you, it is to no purpose that He reigns in heaven and in earth unless He reigns IN YOU.

“And his name shall be called Wonderful.” This is of course the same as “He shall be Wonderful.” Well may He be called by this name, seeing He is so wonderful in Himself, and wonderful in His doings to the children of men; wonderful in His acts of creation, more wonderful still in His work of redemption, wonderful in His miracles, wonderful in His death and resurrection, wonderful in His love to a lost world, wonderful in His condescension to our infirmities, wonderful in His forbearance under the provocations He daily receives, wonderful in His faithfulness, wonderful above all in the amazing mystery of His person, in the circumstances of that incarnation and birth which we this day commemorate.

But His name shall be called Counsellor. He is rightly called Counsellor, for such He was in His pre-existent glory. God the Eternal Father took counsel with Him when He said, “Let us make man,” and “without Him,” we read, “was not anything made that was

made." He was that Eternal Wisdom that "the Lord possessed in the beginning before His works of old."

This Eternal Wisdom, this Son with whom the Father took counsel, stooped, by taking our nature, to become our counsellor; so that, as by partaking of God's nature He could enter into God's designs, so by partaking of our weaknesses He could enter into our wants, our infirmities, our distresses, our temptations, as our friend, as our brother, as our fellow-creature.

Do we know Him, my brethren, as this counselling friend, this counselling brother? Do we know what it is to bring our case—the case of the present salvation of our particular souls, with all its intricacies, all its open and secret difficulties, to Him? Has it not often been, and is it not with us in many points of our spiritual life and struggle, as it was with David, who said, "My strength faileth me; as for the light of mine eyes, it is gone from me. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my trouble, and my kinsmen stood afar off?" If you know yourselves, if you know your own spiritual life, you know well that there are passages in it that you can disclose to none but your Saviour; not to your father the author of your being, nor to your mother that bare you, nor to your brother or sister, or the friend closer than a brother; not to the wife of

your bosom, not to your pastor, minister of reconciliation though he be, but only to your Saviour.

Here, then, is your confidence. He is your Counsellor, for He is God manifest in the flesh, and so you live, you move, you have your being, in one who is God, and yet having taken your nature into the unity of His person, He is present with you as man. He is really present as God by the truth of His nature; for it is the nature of God to be omnipresent—by your side always; and God and man being in Him one person, He is present by your side as man, He is present as your Sympathizing, your Faithful, your Wise, your Almighty Counsellor, to teach you in the way you should go, to guide you with His eye.

"The Mighty God."—The Church insists, above all things, on the proper divinity of our Lord, because all that makes Christianity of value to a lost soul depends upon it. No created being could make amends for the sin of any other created being, and so it behoved Him who made the atonement to be uncreated; and as there is but one uncreated nature, that of God, it was needful that He who reconciled the creatures to God by atonement should be God. This is why the Church has ever been so jealous of the divine honour of the Saviour.

And, indeed, if the Eternal God condescend

to humble Himself to the dust on behalf of His sinful creatures, can there be a greater offence against Him than to disbelieve it, to explain it away, to make as though there was not such loving, such unutterable condescension on God's part as the letter and the spirit of Holy Scripture in every conceivable variety of language and expression assert?

"The Everlasting Father."—This is the only place in God's word where the Son is called by the name of "Father." The word of God rather reveals Him as Son—the Son of man, the Son of God; but let us never forget that He is still a Father, for all things were by Him as their Author. "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." If, then, it is the part of a father to bring into being, He truly, though the Son, is a Father; for He brought all things, men, angels, worlds, into being. If, then, He is a Father, take we good heed that we reverence Him as a Father. If He is a Father, where is His honour?

"The Prince of Peace."—He is the Prince of Peace, for He has made peace for us, and He brings His peace to us. He has made peace for us. He has reconciled God to us, and He invites us through His ambassadors to be reconciled to God. And the peace that He has purchased He bestows internally. He transfuses His peace by His Spirit into our hearts. May we each one of us realize Him as the Prince of

Peace by His saying to each of us, “My peace I give unto you;” by His walking on the troubled sea of our passions, and saying, “Peace, be still!” by His bestowing upon us the sense of pardon and reconciliation, and by His giving us that peace which the world cannot give, so that our hearts may be set to obey His commandments. And then we shall find, if we cleave to Him, that of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end—no end; upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, *i. e.* the Church, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts, the zeal that made Him rise up from His place to smite Satan and deliver his captives by His dwelling in our flesh upon earth—the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform *this*,

S E R M O N VI.

THE OLD YEAR.

PSALM xc. 8.

“Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.”

BEFORE we see the light of another Sunday, if God spares us so long, we shall have entered upon another year. Though I much prefer taking the beginning of the Church's New-year, the season of Advent, as our great yearly time of self-examination, yet the entering upon a new civil year should also call up solemn and holy thoughts; for the year that we have passed, though it be a civil year, is still a year of *grace*. It is a year of months, and weeks, and days, and hours, each one of which may be spent as if God's eye were upon us, or as if He had left us to ourselves, each one of which may be spent as if God would, or as if He would not, call us to account for the deeds done in the body; each one of which may be spent as if we were our own, bought with no price at all, or as if we were not our own, but bought with the precious blood of Christ.

Before the close of the present week, this year of grace will expire. All these twelve months,

of the last of which but a day or two remains, will have flowed away into the gulf of eternity. In one short week the days of 1858 will be gone ; it will have come to an end, like the year before it, as a tale that is told. But though the year will come to an end, will there be an end of it? When it is once gone, shall we have done with it? Will its three hundred and sixty-five days, its many thousand hours, ever rise up again? Has any record been kept of them? These months, and days, and hours; will the things done in them ever make any difference to us? will they tell on our eternity?

With thoughts like these, brethren, let us look back upon the past year. The year, then, is well-nigh gone and past, and so are all the *pleasures* of it. There is a full end of its pleasures. Now, here I do not speak of its pleasures as guilty or innocent ones: we may have had great pleasure in doing a good action, and the pleasure arising from this is not gone because there will be the future reward. I speak of them only as pleasures, and I say that they are gone; every pleasure we have enjoyed is now like a faded flower—just as worthless; all our diversions, all our amusements in which we have spent any time during this past year, are now no more: the remembrance of them is like a dream. Now, it is not so with our acquisitions of knowledge. If we have read any good book, or made ourselves acquainted with any new department

of knowledge, we are now the better for it. We have in such a case made an advance of which we retain the sensible benefit. We have not merely the satisfaction of knowing that we have not been wasting our time. We have got something which is truly our own, as far as anything can be. And as the pleasures of the year are over, so are, to a great extent, its vexations and uneasinesses, its pains and mortifications. When we look back and remember some bodily pain or other that we suffered, we have a sort of satisfaction in thinking that it is passed, that we no longer suffer it; and as regards mortifications and uneasinesses, it is probable now that our only uneasiness is, that we suffered ourselves to be ruffled, or upset, or made miserable for the time by such trifles.

So far, then, for the pleasures and pains of the past year considered in themselves. But have the guilty frivolous pleasures gone? They have gone indeed, so far as regards their enjoyment; but have they left no scar on the soul? Has not every evil thing which has been given way to, rivetted the chains of some evil habit? Has not every self-indulgence weakened the soul? It must be so unless Divine grace has counteracted it.

The drunken man is more confirmed in his drunkenness, the impure in his impurity, the dishonest in his dishonesty, than he was a year ago. He will find it harder now, *humanly*

speaking, to repent and return to God and give up his sin, whatever it may be, than he would have done this day twelve months. If a year ago any of you were far from God, and during this year past you have not returned to Him,—consciously, and of set purpose returned to Him through His Son,—you are now farther than ever from Him, and your ultimate repentance is more unlikely. But all this that I have said only touches your present state. Every hour of sin, every ill-gotten shilling, every instance of fraud, or dishonesty, every lie, every untruth, every intrigue, every slander of the past year, is, as you well know, noted down in God's book of your life. It has not only told on your present character, on your present state, in the sight of God, but it will tell on your eternal condition. I do not go beyond Scripture when I say, that if you are lost, each particular sin will be sensibly felt in its particular punishment.

Now you know this, but will nothing else of the past year be revived but the sins of it? Is our God a God who remembers sins only? I am much afraid that that is the idea which some of you must have of Him, to make you so keep away from Him. Do you think then, I ask, that God has put down each sin of the past year, and has not put down each sincere and earnest prayer? I dare say you do. It is natural that you should think this,—you, I

mean, who worship in spirit and in truth; for truly spiritual worshippers never think of dwelling upon the remembrance of their prayers and praises. They do not try to remember how often and how earnestly they have prayed, because they feel that their very best things are so worthless; so they take no account of them, no note of them. But I tell you that God is not a God to forget one prayer that you have ever put up. If He takes account of the sins of His enemies, how much more does He take account of the prayers, no matter how feeble, of His friends. Not one hour then, not one half-hour of the last year spent in real prayer, has passed away. The sweet savour of it, perhaps, has so far passed that you have forgotten it, but God has every word down.

Yes, my brethren, it is a solemn thing to think that God has a record of our prayers; how many times we have bowed our knees; how many times we have bowed our hearts.

What! is every stated time of prayer and how we then prayed recorded? Is every time we neglected our morning and evening offering put down,—every time we prayed carelessly, hurriedly? Yes, assuredly; if God numbers the hairs of our head, it is not beneath Him to take note of all this. *Beneath Him* did I say? There is nothing beneath God's notice because there is nothing great or small with Him. It is the very perfection of His government to

take notice of the smallest matters as if they were the greatest. If it were otherwise, He would abdicate, lay aside His rule over all things.

And if it is part of God's perfect rule that He should take note of everything, even to the hairs of our head and the drops of dew, how much more does He take note of all that has to do with the loss or salvation of that which is more precious in His sight than a thousand dead worlds,—even a soul for which His only Son died! As far as we can judge from His own words in His own Book, the interest that He takes in the well-being of every member of His Son's Church is beyond conception great. And what advances souls in His life but prayer and communion with Him? No reading of His word, no hearing of preaching, no partaking of Holy Communion, can advance any soul without prayer.

However overwhelming then the thought, it is true—your own reason will testify to its truth—that if God is at the last to be a perfect Judge and deliver a just judgment respecting every soul's case, He must keep a record of every sincere prayer, as well as of every formal mockery of so holy a way of approach to His throne. And not every prayer only, but every look of faith to His Son's cross; every pleading, however feeble, of Christ's merits; every conscious coming to Him, or to the Father

through Him; every dealing, every transaction of the soul with its great Mediator. Not one of these has escaped Him—not one is unregistered—not one will be lost.

My brethren, how often is it said that time past cannot be recalled. *We* cannot recall it. We cannot recall one hour of idleness, one lost opportunity; but though we cannot recall past time, the past year, God *can* and *will*. If at the last we are found out of Christ, He will recall every sin, and confront us with it, in all its circumstances of disgrace, and punish us for it.

If we are in Christ, if we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us, if we adhere to Christ by a living faith, if Christ's cross is our one hope, and Christ's likeness our one aim, then God will not recall one of our sins; they are blotted out, they shall not be remembered against us. But though not one sin shall be remembered, not one service shall be forgotten. Poor though it be, worthless as a cup of cold water, yet God has not forgotten it; though we be ashamed of it, and disclaim it, and would not for worlds mention it, yet, if there is truth in God's word, He will not forget it. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me." Every self-denial, then, of the past year, every religious act, every act having God's glory and His Church's good for

its end, every act of faith and hope and charity, every grateful thanksgiving, every hearty praise, every resistance to temptation, every word spoken in season for God, every wrong endured manfully, every hour spent in teaching, or if there be any one thing besides done as God wishes it, or because He wishes it, all this God can and will recall. He will recall all to His own remembrance; He will not be our debtor for the smallest trifle.

What shall we say, then, to these things?

We must say something to our souls, and we must say something to our God.

We must each one of us say to his soul, "O soul, for what has God brought thee on thy journey thus far? For what has He preserved thy life during the past year? Thou hast seen many souls called away to their account, and thou hast not, as yet, been called upon to render up thine. Thou knowest not why He has called them away; but thou knowest, thou knowest well, why He has spared *thee*. He has spared thee that thou mayest repent; and if thou hast already repented, He has spared thee that thou mayest deepen, that thou mayest perfect, thy repentance—He has spared thee that thou mayest believe in His dear Son to life eternal; and if thou already believest, He has spared thee that thou mayest increase thy faith, and know more of the glory of thy Saviour's Person, and realize more fully His work on thy behalf.

He has spared thee that in the words of His Spirit by His apostle thou mightest add to thy faith virtue, and to thy virtue knowledge, and to thy knowledge temperance, and to thy temperance patience, and to thy patience godliness, and to thy godliness brotherly kindness, and to thy brotherly kindness charity. For these things, then, God has spared thee, O soul, that thou mightest believe with a true and living faith, and that thou mightest add these things to thy faith.

“What then, O my soul, is thy faith? What sign hast thou that it is not dead—that it lives? Has it given thee peace, any peace? Has it made thee love thy Saviour? Believest thou any more than thou didst a year ago of God’s love to thee in the Incarnation, Life, Death, and Resurrection of thy Saviour? And, O soul! what virtue, what Christian virtue, art thou adding to thy faith? What knowledge art thou adding to thy virtue? How is thy Bible read and studied and prayed over? What Christian truths dost thou meditate upon more than thou didst?

“And what temperance addest thou to thy knowledge? Hast thou subdued—art thou subduing any sinful lust? Dost thou practise any self-denial, or enjoyest thou to the full all that thy means allow? What patience addest thou to thy temperance? How bearest thou? How forbeardest thou?

“What godliness addest thou to thy patience?

dost thou wait upon God more or less than thou wert wont to do? Art thou more or less conscious that God's—that Christ's eye is ever upon thee?

What brotherly kindness addest thou to thy godliness? "Lovest thou those with whom God has placed thee,—thy wife, thy children, thy brethren, thy kindred,—with a truer, a heartier, and more Christian love? Carest thou more for the bodily wants, grieveest thou more for the vice and ignorance, of those about thee?

"And with what charity, with what love crownest thou thy Christian progress?

"Lovest thou God more? lovest thou Christ more? Lovest thou more thy brethren in Christ? Lovest thou more the Church of Christ?" Such things, my brother, must thou at this season say to thy soul, and what must thou say to God? Thou must pray to God that He may deliver thee from the past, that He may turn thee to Him and hold thee close to Him now at this present, and that He may take thy future, thy unknown future into His holy care. Thou must say to Him, when thou reviewest the past year, in words that thou knowest right well: "And now, Lord, what is my hope?" what is my hope for forgiveness and acceptance? "Truly my hope is even in Thee." "Deliver me from all mine offences;" deliver me from their guilt; deliver me from their evil effect upon me. Each sin has decayed my strength: renew in me, most loving Father,

whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by mine own carnal will and frailty. Thus must thou bring the past before God.

And thou must bring the present, thy present state before Him, and say, "Turn Thou us, and we shall be turned;" "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not;" "Spare me a little that I may recover my strength."

And when thou lookest forward to thy future—that road of which thou knowest not one turn, that sea of which thou knowest not one rock, one shoal, or one storm that may await thee,—then thou must commit thy way to Him, thou must say to Him, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth;" "My times are in Thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me."

And thou must express thy trust that He will do as thou hast prayed. Thou must be confident that He who hath begun a good work in thee will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Thou must say, "As for me, I will patiently abide alway, and will praise Thee more and more?" "My mouth shall daily speak of Thy righteousness and salvation, for I know no end thereof;" "I will go forth in the strength of "the Lord God, and will make mention of Thy righteousness only."

SERMON VII.

JESUS IN OBSCURITY.

ST. LUKE ii. 46.

“And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”

THE few verses read this morning as the gospel for this Sunday ought to be esteemed very precious, for they contain the one only account which we have of about thirty years of the life of the Redeemer of the world. “What!” I hear some one say, “our blessed Saviour twenty-eight years in the world, and nothing more recorded of His history during this time than what we find in this day’s gospel! This surely cannot be. There must be some mistake here. It cannot be that our blessed Lord, God and man in one person, could have been living all these years in obscurity. He must have been preaching at least for many of these years, and we cannot but have some of His teaching left for our instruction.” No : preach during these years He assuredly did not—that we know for a certainty ; for when He afterwards did begin to preach in the very town in which He had been brought up, some short time after He

had entered upon His ministry, the people who had known Him all His life were astonished. They had never heard Him before. They asked, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary; and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence hath this man this wisdom? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?" (Matthew xiii. 55, 56; Mark vi. 3.)

But some one may say, "It may be He was notable to preach; perhaps it was given to Him to preach such sermons as the Sermon on the Mount when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him at His baptism!" But neither can this be received for a moment, for there is one thing told of Him during these first years of His life—one only thing that the Holy Ghost has seen fit to record for our learning; and this one thing shows how able He would have been from His early youth to have preached publicly to His countrymen if such had been the will of His Father. This one incident of Christ's life is His disputation with the doctors in the temple, recorded in the Gospel for this morning. "Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing

Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

I shall afterwards dwell upon the meaning and purpose of this incident: suffice it to say here, in passing, that it is clear that our Lord manifested by it His perfect ability to preach God's law, (if such had been His Father's will,) from His twelfth year. He who then commanded the attention of the Jewish doctors in the chief seat of their learning and religion, could well have kept the simple folk of Nazareth hanging on His lips. It was to fulfil His Father's will, then, that He kept for the first thirty years of His life in strict privacy, not even preaching in the synagogues.

Well, but during this time did our Lord do no mighty works? No, not one. There is no miracle recorded in the gospels as done by Him till He turned the water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. Now, was He not God all this time? Yes, there never was a moment from His very conception in which His manhood had existed separate from His

Godhead. How is it, then, that we have no account of wonders wrought by Him in His youth and early manhood? Because it was the Father's will that He should spend thirty years unknown and unnoticed, bearing the inconveniences and humiliations of a lowly humble lot, like any other poor man living in a small town.

Now, some presumptuous men in an early age of the Church were dissatisfied with the fact of our Lord having spent so many years in retirement without doing any wonderful work, veiling His glory, and looking like any other good and holy poor man; and so they were wicked enough to forge certain false accounts of Christ's infancy and youth, in which He is made to do all manner of childish miracles; but these stories are their own confutation. The miracles ascribed to our Lord bear all the marks of folly as well as falsehood. They are ridiculous and dishonourable to Him as the holy, humble, obedient, forbearing child. I merely mention them, to show how unable men are to improve on the word of God; how its seeming deficiencies are better than man's knowledge, for the greatest wonder of all is, that the eternal Son of the Father should pass so many years of His life in an obscure private station. This teaches us, if we will but listen to it, far more than the fullest account of our Lord's early life would have done. He was a private person

for thirty years, and He lived as such an one, and the omission of all account of this part of His life is in perfect accord with this. There is no account of Him, just as there would be no account of any other poor man in such circumstances. All we are told is that He lived with His parents, and was subject to them, and that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Before we begin to draw the needful and obvious lesson from this, it may be well to say a few words respecting Christ's disputing with the doctors in the temple. I do not think that its meaning can be realized till we understand aright the words of Christ. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The most probable meaning of the original is, "Wist ye not that I must be in *my Father's house*?"*

The narrative in the gospels is given very briefly indeed, and if we may be allowed to conjecture, the accompanying circumstances were something of this sort. We know that Jewish youths, when about twelve years of age, were taken to the temple to be examined, just as our children are examined for confirmation, when they are supposed to understand the nature of the vows made for them in their baptism. Our Lord was taken in due course

* Such is the primary meaning of the Greek, and so it is rendered by the Syriac, the oldest version of the New Testament.

to the temple at the feast of the Passover, by His mother and foster-father. There would be many persons from the same place, in the company or caravan; for the state of society throughout the East, and the defective means of communication, have ever been such as to prevent any lengthened journey except in large companies. Joseph and Mary, then, accompanying one of the caravans from Nazareth, would have many acquaintances and friends among the multitudes at Jerusalem collected from all parts of Galilee.

We may be quite sure, without detracting the least from the piety of His mother and her husband, that our Lord's delight in the temple of God and its services would far exceed that of any of the band of worshippers from Galilee. In a way that no other living being could do, He would feel *that* house to be His home. With far deeper and truer meaning than His great forefather would *He* say, "Oh, how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God." He would be all day there, whilst those connected with Him, after they had fulfilled the requirements of the law, would pass more time with their friends and acquaintances. If such were the case, (and we can scarcely believe it to have been otherwise,)

the whole company of Nazarene worshippers might have set off on their journey homeward, whilst He had no notice of their departure. "They were accustomed, (as I said,) on these occasions, for their greater security against robbers on the road, to travel in large companies, carrying food with them, and tents for their lodging by night. This account of their manner of travelling furnishes a ready answer to the question, how could Joseph and Mary make a day's journey without discovering before night that Jesus was not in the company? In the daytime we may reasonably suppose that the travellers would mingle with different parties of their friends or acquaintances, but that in the evening, when they were about to encamp, every one would join the family to which he belonged. As Jesus did not appear, when it was growing late, they first sought Him where it was most probable that He would be, in the tents of some of His relations or acquaintances, and not finding Him they returned to Jerusalem."* When they had once set off and left the Holy Child behind, there was no help for it; our Lord being but twelve years old, and subject to all the conditions of childhood, must wait till they who had the care of Him either returned themselves or sent some one to fetch Him. They returned themselves. Now,

* Note in "Treasury Harmony."

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will of His heavenly Father, He allowed the company with which He had come to Jerusalem to depart without Him; and God so ordered it that His mother and her husband should find Him after their long search when He was giving to the assembled doctors of the Jewish law such proofs of heavenly and supernatural skill in the Scriptures. Unlikely as it may at first sight appear, I cannot help looking at this incident in much the same light as I look at the Transfiguration. It seems to me to have been intended to be to His mother and her husband, during the first years of our Lord's life, what the Transfiguration was to the disciples afterwards; a sudden gleam of glory streaming through, and dispersing, for a moment, the cloud of humiliation which hid our Lord's Deity from men's eyes. Just as the disciples were vouchsafed for a few minutes the vision of our Lord as He will appear at the last day, His countenance bright as the sun, His raiment glistening with light, in order that they might see how glorious He was in Himself who condescended to suffer a shameful death, so God showed to Joseph and Mary, by the sight of our Lord among the great doctors of the law, astonishing them by His wisdom and knowledge, something of what He really was whose youth they were permitted to watch over.

Now, my brethren, in order to form some-

thing approaching to a feeble estimate of how our blessed Lord humbled Himself for us long before He was crucified, we must bear in mind this circumstance of His disputing with, and astonishing the heads of the Jewish Church by His understanding and answers.

He who thus showed His heavenly wisdom, instead of stopping at Jerusalem to take the foremost place amongst the teachers of the law, went down to Nazareth with His parents, was subject to them, was brought up not to learning, but to a *trade*, the trade of a carpenter. "Is not this," the people who opposed Him scornfully asked on one occasion, "the carpenter's son?" So His foster-father must, we gather from this, have worked at this trade; and that he brought up the Holy Child to the same is equally evident from the fact, that on another occasion Christ's enemies asked, "Is not this the carpenter?"

For fifteen or sixteen years of His life, then, the Holy Jesus was not preaching except by a holy life; for fifteen or sixteen years He did no wonderful thing, except the wonderful humiliation of mixing as a working-man with His fellow-men, just as if He was in all respects one of themselves.

Now, here we may be tempted to ask, why should this have been? why should the Incarnate wisdom of God have thus kept Himself to Himself? Why should He thus have put

off the time of His ministry? Why did He not go about teaching and preaching? Why? Because He was teaching us and all ages of the Church much more by His silence, by His retirement, by His humility, by His obedience, by His unobtrusive submission, than if He had preached every day a sermon like the Sermon on the Mount. He, God's own Son, was in very deed teaching all these thirty years. He was, first of all, teaching children that their chief religion is obedience to their parents; and, in the next place, He was teaching the great multitude of Christians the good and holy thing that we learn in our Catechism, that "we must learn and labour truly to get our own living, and do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us." Yes, ye labouring men, ye who have to earn your bread by hard work, ye who have to serve others, to be at the beck and call of employers, to receive their orders, to accommodate your likes and dislikes to theirs, remember for the good of your souls; and that you may the more cheerfully submit to God's will, and be made the better Christians by so doing, remember that God's own Son, your Saviour, who is now at God's right hand, was for many years of His life just like one of you. Our Lord was for many years a carpenter in a small town, doing His duty, assisting His foster-father at first, and then

very probably maintaining His mother after Joseph's death by the same occupation.

Now, an occupation of this kind must be much the same everywhere, and at all times. We know, from two or three passages of Isaiah, one of which was read for the first lesson this morning, that carpenters in His days handled the same tools as they who follow that occupation now. Here, then, the Redeemer of the world must have been for many years employed in a workshop, handling the saw, the plane, the rule, the hammer, the nails—ah! my redeemed brethren, the hammer! the nails! it is a solemn thought that Jesus for years handled the hammer and the nails, and fashioned rafters and fitted them ACROSS one another almost every day of His life. Did He know, whilst He was thus occupied, what death He should die? that He should die on two of such beams nailed across one another, and that with the hammer they should drive the nails through His feet and the palms of His hands. Then remember how He must have had to work in a shop with others, to rise up early and go home late; perhaps often had to go far away with other labourers to some distant work; and all this under a Syrian sun. And how did He demean himself all this time? Was He always trying to teach by word of mouth? always talking of Scripture? always reproofing and rebuking? I think not. Very probably He spoke little,

was reserved, taught by example, by seriousness of demeanour. His words were probably very few, gentle, persuasive. If it had been otherwise His townsmen would not have expressed such astonishment when they heard Him preach for the first time. Remember, too, that there was nothing in His outward appearance to overawe the beholder. You are not of course to suppose that He had any glory, any halo round His head as He has in pictures; any light streaming from His face as Moses had when he came down from the Mount. You might perhaps have passed Him, and not noticed Him.

Now you see, I am sure, by this, my poorer fellow-Churchmen, how Christ has hallowed your state of life. To say that the condition of a labouring man who follows Christ is respectable is saying very little,—Christ has hallowed labour. If it is good to be like Christ, then your condition is in the sight of God better than that of what is commonly called *the gentleman*. I do not mean of course that you are personally better—that, under God's grace, depends on yourselves; but this I say, that the greater part of the life of God's own Son whilst in the world was a life of manual labour, a life of manual labour too chosen by God for Him and submitted to by Him when He had shown that He had understanding and wisdom enough to teach the wisest men of His nation.

Think of this. We who are priests of God and teachers of His word rightly esteem Christ's example as a minister as the one we ought to follow. We, I hope, rightly believe that we act on Christ's commission which He gave the apostles when He said to them, "As my Father sent me, so send I you."

But let us remember, and do you remember, that though the last three years of Christ's life were spent as a minister to teach and encourage clergymen, the thirty years before it were spent as a private person to teach us how precious in God's sight is private religion—doing our duty humbly and prayerfully in that state of life to which it hath pleased God to call us—industriously working with our hands for our daily bread.

My fellow-Christian, if you are a labouring man, working with your hands for your family, here is encouragement indeed for you. You may be assured that Christ remembers now on His throne what He underwent in the carpenter's shop. And so He can enter into your trials. Do you feel what it is to be amongst ungodly fellow-workmen? How must Christ have felt this? He must have felt it far more than you do, for He was not a sinner, and you are. Because you are a sinner, conceived and born in sin, you cannot feel for the honour of God when you see or hear what is wrong, as Christ felt when He

saw or heard what was wrong. The sight of sin must have cut Him to the quick, far more acutely than it does you. Because you are a sinner, your sense of sin is blunted, but it was not so with Him. He alone of all His fellows knew perfectly how sin outrages God's law, and degrades and destroys man. What then must He have endured to be in all respects counted as the fellow of sinners, to live amongst them, as one of themselves? Then perhaps you have to bear with much—you are misunderstood—suspected, blamed for the faults of others. Well, so no doubt was Christ. He could not have lived fifteen years at a trade in a small town without others misunderstanding Him. We know that when He was going about exercising His ministry, they "daily mistook His words." Then perhaps you think that you are in too low a position for your talents and your knowledge; well, so was Christ: for eighteen years He who had shown His skill in the Scriptures and astonished by His understanding and answers the heads of the Church in the temple, was handling the plane and the saw. Then perhaps you are tempted to think that you are not useful because you do not preach—at all events, if you do no good in that way, you do no harm, as many do that take upon themselves to preach before they have passed a single year even in the study of God's Holy word, before they have learnt what even to a

superficial reader must be one of the most obvious lessons of that word—that Christ desires the peace and unity of the Church as well as the conversion of souls; before they have learnt that our heavenly Father does not desire that His sons may leave His house and spend their best years in sin in order that His free grace may be magnified in their welcome home again. If you are thus tempted, remember that God's own Incarnate Wisdom for eighteen years preferred to preach not in the pulpit, but by the example of a quiet, serious, sober, godly workman's life.

Now, you see, my friends, in how many things in your common life your Saviour can feel for you. This Saviour is your Friend; are you His? Have you come to Him? Are you ever coming to Him? Do you abide in Him? Do you love His word, and show forth His death at His communion? Why do you keep away from Him? Why do you allow your miserable drunken habits, your miserable swearing habits, your miserable ungodly, Sabbath-breaking habits, to keep you from the blessedness of those who love, serve, and please Him? And why are not more of you at the Holy Communion of One who once laboured as you do, who lived a life of toil that He might sanctify toil, that He might sanctify the working man's estate, so that by passing through it, looking to Him, the working man might attain to eternal rest.

SERMON VIII.

THE INVITATION OF THE SAVIOUR.

ST. MATTHEW xi. 28.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

“COME unto me,” the Saviour says in this place. Who is He that we should come to Him? Where is He that we may come? How are we to come? Whom does He so lovingly call to Himself? What are we to come for to Him? All these questions, and many more, arise from this promise of the Blessed Jesus.

May God give us the grace of His Holy Spirit, so that we may all hear the voice of Christ and obey His invitation, and find rest to our souls.

Who is He that invites us? Let His own words in the verse before assure us.

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”

It is, then, no other than the God and the

governor of all things who thus invites sinners. It is the heir of all things; to whom all things are delivered; who has all power in heaven and in earth.

But if it be the Eternal Word, who made all things, who thus invites men, how is it that He says of himself in the next verse,—“Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?” Can the high and lofty One, who fills heaven and earth, be meek and lowly? A man is meek and lowly when he knows how weak, how small, how insignificant, he is; and God’s Son must have known when He said this that He himself had once made, and was then sustaining, all things. Ah! but He had shown that there is a something answering to meekness even in the Godhead; for He who was from all eternity, in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant. He who was by nature in the likeness of God, to fulfil His Father’s will was made in the likeness of men. He who has fashioned all things was formed in fashion as a man. He who is before all things *humbled Himself*. He who is the Lord of life became obedient unto death; and He who is the fountain of all honour became subject to the most dishonourable form of death—the death of the cross.

He, then, who was thus great and thus lowly—thus great as God, and thus lowly as

man—calls to us, “Come unto me, all ye.” Truly it is the voice of God. It calls up before us God’s invitation in Isaiah, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and none else.”

But where are we to find Him? Where is He that we should enter into His presence and embrace His feet? My brethren, He is everywhere; for He is the omnipresent God. He is in the wilderness where no man dwelleth. He is in the secret chamber, where the sufferer or sorrower watches through weary hours for the morning, if so be the day may bring some refreshment; or watches through the day, hoping against hope, that the shadows of night may bring some repose. He is in the crowded workshop—in the market—in the social circle—in the family gathering at the evening meal. Yes, wherever a prayer can be offered to Him, or in His name, there He can hear it. Wherever a poor sufferer is bearing the cross, there is Christ by his side to sustain its weight when it would crush him. Wherever Satan is, or can be, there is He who once bound him, and who holds in His hand the chain that yet binds the evil one.

But is He anywhere in particular? Is there any place to which He has promised a peculiar presence? God, we know, is, and always was, everywhere, and yet this did not

hinder that He should be more particularly in a certain place, the temple of Jerusalem, between the cherubims, above the mercy-seat.

Has His Son any place or places where He in like manner vouchsafes particularly to be? And what is the sign of His presence, that we may confidently know that He is there?

He is where His body is. His natural body is in heaven, at the right hand of God. There He presents the token of His passion before His Father. There, on the very throne of God, is a "Lamb, as it were, slain." Let us think of this when we say *His* prayer—when we say "Our Father." Let us think that in the heaven where our Father is there is our elder Brother—there is our High Priest—there is our Head.

But He has a mystical body—His Church. And He is where she is—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

My brethren, would that we could realize this more, and believe it with a firmer faith, that whenever we meet here for prayer and praise we meet Christ here—no matter how few there be. Whenever we come here for daily prayer we put ourselves into His more immediate presence. Oh! if we but believed this, how different would it make each service within these hallowed walls! How much more real and hearty would be our

prayers ! How much greater our fear of losing a blessing !

But we must pass on. If He is present where men meet for prayer and praise only, how very peculiarly must He be present where we show forth before His Father the token of His Passion. Where His Sacramental Body is there must He be indeed ; in spirit, but still in reality ; and more in reality, because in spirit, for it is "the spirit that quickeneth." The carnal eating—the eating in which we discern not the Lord's body—profiteth nothing. But more of this hereafter.

We next consider, How are we to come ? Now, of course, we come in prayer ; we come by faith.

When with a true penitent heart and lively faith you say, in the *Te Deum*, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ ! Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge. We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Thy saints"—when you say this from your heart, con-

sciously looking to Christ to hear you, then you come to Christ.

And, again, when you say in solemn Litany, "Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take Thou vengeance of our sins. Spare us, good Lord; spare Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood." And when you say, "By the mystery of Thy holy incarnation, by Thy holy nativity and circumcision, by Thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, good Lord, deliver us. By Thine agony and bloody sweat, good Lord, deliver us"—when you say this from your heart, feeling the plague of your heart, and deeply conscious that Christ alone is your healing, your deliverance, then you come to Christ. Now, you see, my brethren, from this, how that though the Church is the place to meet Christ, the place where He is as He is nowhere else, still you may come to church and yet not come to Christ. In the services that most set forth Christ you may actually never see Him—be unconscious of Him. You may come into the immediate presence of the bestower of all blessing, and yet be unblessed. Being in His presence is nothing to you unless you have faith. You know how, in the days of His flesh, the multitudes thronged Him and touched Him, and yet the greater part of them went away without a blessing.

The healing was reserved for those who believed that He came to heal, and that He was able to heal, willing to heal—for the man who was let down in the bed, for Zacchæus who climbed up into the tree to see Him, or the woman who touched the hem of His garment.

So He is in church; and if you come lifting up your heart to Him here, and hoping to find Him here, here He will meet you.

And, still more, you come to Him all the same, whether you pray to Him or to His Father through Him. So St. Paul says, "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God *by Him*, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

When, then, you pray earnestly to God, and at the same time and with equal earnestness mention His Son's name, or office, or blood, or merit, as a reason why He should hear you, then you come to Him.

When you come to Him personally, you ask the exercise of His power. When you come to His Father through Him, you ask the exercise of His mediation. When, then, you truly abase yourself before God, and say in your confession, "Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults; restore Thou them that are penitent, according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord," Or when from your hearts you say or sing in your evening hymn:—

“ Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
The ills that I this day have done,”

then you come to Jesus.

And so in private prayer, or in family prayer, when you bend before God's throne and think of Him Who is sitting there; and when you think that He who once died for you has now His eye upon you, and distinctly discerns you amongst the multitudes who are looking to Him; when you are conscious that to meet His gracious eye is to have your petition granted, or something better given you—your life spared, your soul saved—when you think this, or something like this, and pray to Jesus, or to God through Jesus, then you come to Him, then you obey that gracious call, “ Come unto me.”

But now we must consider, whom does He call? Now He says here, “ Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden,” and elsewhere His invitations are so exceedingly general, that of two expositions—one of which would extend His invitation as much as the words will possibly allow, and another which would rather restrict them—I am sure it is the safest to take the former; and, God willing, I shall do so in this case, and may God forgive me if I err in this respect. I think I do not.

“ Come, then, unto me, *all* ye that labour ;” to these words are generally added, “ under a

sense of sin." "Come unto me, all ye that feel your sins a burden. Come unto me, ye that are labouring to establish your own righteousness and cannot;" but, as I said again, I cannot put the least restriction on these words. I believe that they are addressed to every weary, sorrowing son or daughter of Adam, no matter whether the weariness or sorrow be for sin or not. I believe that the great second Adam here invites to Himself every one of His toiling and sorrowing fellow-creatures, provided, of course, that the sorrow be a lawful sorrow. If a man is downcast, or chafes because he cannot compass some bad end, as Ahab when he could not get his covetous desire for Naboth's vineyard satisfied, then, of course, he is not invited to bring such heaviness to Christ; but I say, again, whatever else be the sorrow that presses upon you, whatever else the toil or the burden that bears you down, bring it to Him; even though you may not be conscious that sin is, after all, the thing that makes the burden so heavy, or the toil so wearying, still bring your grief to Him.

In an old heathen writer we read a famous saying, "I am a man, and so I regard every thing human as something that I have to do with," or, "I am a man; I am interested in all that belongs to man." Now how supremely is this true of our Saviour. He is the Second

Man—the Second Adam. There is a link that binds Him to every human being. He knows the thing that presses down each soul, and the value of each soul.

Bring then, fretting soul, bring your thorn in the flesh, bring your human, your temporal—aye, your worldly—grief to Him. You cannot but receive good by having to do with Him in anything. I cannot but believe that if you come to Him as the comforter under any sorrow, the physician under any disease, the friend in any need—that if you thus honour His power and His fellow-feeling, I cannot but think, I say, that you would come away with a thing that you little imagine—you would come away with the best of gifts, the knowledge of yourself and of Him. I cannot but think that it is for this—viz. to invite us to come to Him always for all things—that we have examples of men coming to Him, in the Gospels, for the healing of mere temporal disease, and He sends them away with what they want, and with the forgiveness of their sins into the bargain. Not only do we hear the words, “Be whole of thy plague,” but also, “Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace.”

Come, then, to Him, ye that are steeped in poverty. Come to Him, ye that are unhappy at home. Come to Him, ye that are disappointed, neglected, oppressed. Come to Him, ye that have no friends, or friends that

cannot help. Come to Him, ye that are slandered or deserted. He in His day had a taste of all these things. I do not think that you can be wrong in coming to Him about them.

Come unto Him, ye that labour, *i. e.*, ye sons of toil. He was once a working man like you. He, during His youth and early manhood, handled the tools that some of you do. He carried loads till He was weary. His hands were hard with toil before they were pierced with the nails. How is it that working men can hold back as they do from a Saviour who was one of themselves—who once worked as they do? Shame, shame upon workingmen who stay away from the courts, and the house, and the communion of their Saviour, who neither read His Bible, nor hear His ministers, and jeer at those among them who do.

But we must now come to those whom the Saviour especially invites. He came to "save His people from their sins," and, above all, does He here invite those who want to be rid of sin. Do you feel and know that you are not right with God—that you have hitherto lived without God in His own world, without Christ in His own Church? Do you feel that you have lived hitherto an unthankful life, receiving unnumbered mercies, without any surrender of yourself to the Giver? Do you feel that you have lived an unholy life, doing things

that it is a shame to mention, and allowing your heart to be polluted with all uncleanness? Do you feel that your converse, *i. e.*, your conversation, has been unworthy of a Christian? Perhaps you have never said a really religious word, or reproved a single sin in your whole life. Do you feel all this? Are you grieved? sorry at heart for it all? Are you disgusted with yourself? disheartened when you think of the way to heaven? discouraged by repeated attempts to set out, which have come to nothing, or worse than nothing? Have you anything of David's mind when he said, "Withdraw not Thou Thy mercies from me, O Lord; let Thy loving kindness and Thy truth always preserve me. For innumerable troubles have compassed me about; my sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up?"

Then the case is clear. You are one whom the Saviour invites to come to Him that He may loose you from your bonds, and cleanse you and comfort you—in a word, give you rest—that peace which you have so often prayed for with your lips, but with no heart in the prayer—even peace which the world cannot give, that your heart may be set to obey God's commandments, and that being delivered from the fear of your enemies you may pass your time in the rest and quietness of the Gospel.

But suppose that, instead of being fully

alive to this evil of your sin, you are only half alive to it. Suppose that you are conscious that you do not half know yourself; that you do not half repent. Suppose that, instead of being weighed down with the burden with which your less sinful brother is, you only half lament your state. The principal thing that you feel is your want of true feeling in the matter.

What is to be done under such unpromising circumstances? Even then there is only one thing to be done,—to come to Him, and to Him alone, for He alone can either deepen repentance or strengthen faith.

As, no doubt, you have been many and many a time told in sermons, and many and many a time read, that you are not to wait till you are better before you come to Christ, so you must assuredly not wait till you feel worse. There is no use in keeping from Him till you repent more and believe better. If you feel your want of repentance, if you feel your weakness, your want of faith, come to Him, that your repentance may be deepened and your faith strengthened. Come to Him with the words, "Lord, I repent; help Thou mine impenitence." "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

"I will give you rest." "I will give you rest from trouble, so that it shall not distress you. I will give you comfort in sorrow, so that you shall not be cast down. In disappointment I

will give you a hope that never shall fail. In loneliness My holy angels shall be with you, and I Myself with My Father, according to My promise, will come to you and Make Our abode in you. Above all, I will forgive your sin. You shall hear Me say, or you shall know that I have said, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace.' I will heal the wound of your nature. I will give you strength to walk before Me in righteousness. I will give you Him who is One with my Father and Myself; I will give you the Comforter. He shall shed abroad My love in your heart, and when once you love Me all my commandments will be easy to you. He shall give you My peace so that, having been justified by faith, you shall have peace with God through Me, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

I have not time at present to enter upon the exposition of the words of Christ which follow. Remember, however, that if you come to Him you must come to take His yoke upon you. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek," &c.; and yet though He mentions a yoke, you need not fear, for He proceeds to say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." How learning to be meek and lowly after Christ's example is taking His yoke and learning of Him, we must consider at some future time.

Let us devote a few moments, in conclusion,

to the consideration of how we are to come to Him in the most comfortable sacrament of His body and blood.

In that wonderful discourse respecting the Blessed Sacrament, contained in the sixth chapter of St. John, Our Lord intimately connects together "coming to Him" and "feeding on Him." "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of my flesh he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (v. 35, 51.)

God, then, has joined together these two things, coming to Christ and eating His flesh. The Church, too, has joined them, for she bids us hear these most comfortable words of our Saviour Christ when we draw near to His Blessed Sacrament.

There are two sets of people who put these asunder—those who think to come to Christ without coming to the Communion, and those who come to the Communion without really and truly, and in their hearts, coming to Christ. Both these, I need not say, are miserably wrong.

They are wrong, indeed, who come to the Holy Sacrament without consciously thinking of Christ and desiring His grace, though with such a service as ours, which so sets forth the

Saviour, and in which the beams of His mercy shine so very bright, it is difficult to conceive how there can be such.

And they are wrong, indeed, who think of coming to Christ without coming to His Communion. Only think of people saying that they come to Him and yet holding aloof from Him when in the most solemn way He offers Himself to them. Only think of people coming to Him and not showing forth that death by which He atoned for their sins. Only think of people coming to Him and not making that remembrance of Him which He ordained when He gave Himself for them.

It cannot be.

In this way, my brethren, you may see as to your preparation for the Lord's table. If you have come, or are coming, or desire to come to Christ for what He promises—forgiveness, pardon, peace, strength, health of soul, comfort, the love of God shed abroad in you—if you desire these things, and desire them in and through Christ, then you will be a fitting guest at His table.

SERMON IX.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

ST. MATTHEW xix. 27—xx. 16.

“Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first

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came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called but few chosen."

WHEN the blessed apostle and evangelist St. Matthew wrote his Gospel, he did not, (as I hope you are all well aware,) make in it one single division like those which we now call chapters and verses. The Gospel of St. Matthew has been written well-nigh eighteen hundred years, but its division into chapters and verses is not yet four hundred years old. I am saying this because I want to impress upon you that this breaking up of the New Testament is no part of the work of inspiration; and if we adhere to it slavishly we shall be, in very many cases, in danger of misunderstanding the words of the Holy Spirit. Such would be the case with the parable read as the Gospel for this Sunday. A very many people, I am greatly afraid—it may be some among you—are misunderstanding this to the present, and perhaps the eternal loss of your souls. And this misunderstanding is mainly owing to your not considering that certain verses in the latter

part of the nineteenth chapter are the introduction to this parable and contain the key to its right apprehension.

Now, I do not deny that this place of Scripture is difficult, but I trust we shall be able to clear away some of the difficulty so as at least to show what it certainly does not teach us, and to show also one thing that it certainly does teach us.

First, then, respecting the lessons which this parable does *not* teach us, but which, I am afraid, many people, wrongly and wickedly draw from it.

In the first place, it does not teach us that the rewards of eternity will be all equal. What, you will say, did not all the labourers, no matter how long or how diligently they had laboured, each get merely one penny? Yes—and is not one penny just as good as another? No, certainly not; one penny is not as good as another—at least it was not so in the case of the labourers in this parable, for some of these people received their penny with thankfulness and some received their penny with discontent and envy. I warrant you, that the latter got less real good from their penny than the former. What we, as human beings, want, is not so much weight of gold and silver, as happiness and enjoyment, and these depend not upon what we HAVE, but upon what we ARE. A hungry man enjoys a crust more than a full surfeited

man enjoys the daintiest dish. A cheerful man enjoys a day's hard work more than an ill-tempered man enjoys a day to himself. A kindly domestic man enjoys his family, whilst a cross-grained man would make the same home miserable. Now, so it will be—it *must* be with the world to come. Supposing that the penny of the parable means eternal happiness in heaven, the amount of that happiness to each of us will depend upon the dispositions we take with us there, and those dispositions will depend upon our present use of God's grace. The more you work out your salvation here, the more you cleanse the garden of your soul from all the weeds with which it is overrun. The more you pray for God's grace, and the more you keep in God's grace; the more you do all this, which is, in fact, working in your plot of the vineyard, the more you will love God, and those who are like God; and so when Christ welcomes you to the joy of your Lord, you will be the happier there because heaven is the place where God is, and you love Him and delight in His worship; and heaven is the place where glorified saints are, and you love them and enjoy their company.

An eternity without any grief or pain is, in one respect, like the penny of the parable. It is just as long to one man as to another, just as one man's pound has as many shillings in it as another man's, but here the likeness ends.

Supposing that two labourers have the same wages, one will make the same money go as far again as the other, and one will receive double the real happiness and benefit from the spending of it that the other will; and so it must be with eternity. It is as long to St. Paul as it is to the sinner saved as by fire, but St. Paul enjoys it ten thousand times more because he has prepared better for the enjoyment of such a state by growth in divine grace.

So you see, I hope, that we need not travel out of the parable to show you that it is not intended to teach us that the rewards of eternity will be all equal. But more than this, we are not permitted to draw such a meaning from this place of Scripture, because by doing so we should make it contradict other parables of Christ, which tell us in plain terms that the rewards of eternity will not be all equal. Such, for instance, is the parable of the pounds, in the nineteenth chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke, twelfth verse. There we read, and they are quite as much the words of our Lord as this parable, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered to them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him,

to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said, Well, (*i.e.* well done,) thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities." You see from this that our Lord teaches us that the glory of eternity will be strictly in accordance with the way in which we have used God's grace—the same grace in baptism at least is given to all, for all have a gift of the one Spirit, but one cultivates this gift ten times as much as another, and one five times as much; and the man who uses God's gift so as to increase it tenfold, has ten times as much glory, and the man who uses it so as to increase it fivefold, has five times as much glory. Then remember, too, what St. Paul says, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds," and so "he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." So, that if we gather from this parable that all men will be equally happy and equally glorious in eternity—we shall draw from it what will contradict other Scriptures of God and other words of Christ.

No; among those who are saved finally there will be every imaginable difference of happiness and honour. They will have all one thing which, as to its duration, will be the same—they will all have eternal life; but in that eternal life there will be every possible difference of happiness and glory, just as in this life there is every possible difference of faith and love, and good works. The just will not be received into eternal life for their deeds, but they will be rewarded IN eternal life according to their deeds.

But we must now come to another thing which men draw from this parable to their souls' destruction—which assuredly it does not teach—which is that a man may go on with impunity rejecting God's calls till he is stretched upon his death-bed, and then if he but turn to God he will be in exactly the same position as those who have served God from their youth.

This is the famous parable in which mention is made of the *eleventh hour*. This is the parable that has given rise to men calling old age, or the last scene of life, the eleventh hour, and talking about men being accepted even at the eleventh hour. Now, God forbid that I should deny that the all-merciful Saviour will accept any one who turns to Him in sincerity at any time of his life, but I do most strongly deny that we can safely gather anything of

the sort from this parable. For let us consider what an eleventh hour is. The eleventh hour is the last hour but one in a day of *exactly* twelve hours long. Now, if human life were always one certain length, then we could call the last part of it the eleventh hour, but it is not so. For instance, if God had so ordained that every man should live till he was exactly sixty years old, and die in his sixtieth year, then we might call fifty-five years old the eleventh hour; but a man who is sixty may live till seventy and a man who is twenty may not live till he is twenty-one. So, in point of fact, there is no "eleventh hour" as regards the life of each individual; for such a way of speaking, to be correct, implies that men's lives last the same number of years in every case, which they do not.

I say, then, that it is *almost* (I say *almost*) impossible to believe that this parable means that men and women in Christ's Church, such as you, are called by God to be religious at different periods of their lives—some when they are young, some when they are in middle age, and some when they are old, and that those who are converted to God when they are old are as pleasing to God as those who grow up in Christ from their childhood, or turn to Him in early youth. I say it is next to impossible to believe that this is the right interpretation, for there are two things in the parable

that are directly contrary to such a view of it. One is this: we find that, in the parable, those who were called at the first hour were discontented when they received only the penny, and they murmured at the owner of the vineyard. Now is it at all likely that persons who were called to religion early in life and had continued through the heat of the day working in God's vineyard—that is, had persevered throughout their lives in cultivating every Christian grace—is it likely, I ask, that such would murmur when they first entered into the joy of their Lord because their reward did not seem adequate to their deserts? Impossible. Again, is it likely that such would murmur because others received equal happiness? Why, is it not the daily prayer of those who are touched by God's grace in early youth that others should be made before they die truly religious, in order that they may share with them their happiness? Those who had grown in grace from their early years would never murmur because those who had been converted when old shared heaven with them. So I argue from this that it is exceedingly unlikely that this hiring of these labourers at different hours of the day betokens God's calling Christians at different times of life.

But there is another thing that makes it still more unlikely. If by the ninth and eleventh hours are meant the later time of

life, and the labourers who obey the call at these hours are meant those who, after they have been all their lives hearing the gospel, come to Christ for the first time when they are sixty or seventy years old, the whole parable would have to be altered. In such a case we should rather have expected our Lord to have described a man going out early and finding the market full of labourers, and offering them a fair day's wages. Some accept the call, but the greater part mock and jeer at his offers of work. After this he goes out at the third hour, and finds the same people who had refused his offers before, and makes the same offer to them all again; and a few accept and turn in to work, but the rest scoff and jeer as before. So, at the sixth hour, he goes and finds the same lazy people hanging about. Some few more turn in, but the rest behave just as badly as at first; but at the last, when those who have been called five or six times find that for one hour's work they can get a full day's wages, then these same persons whom he had been all day fruitlessly endeavouring to persuade, at last turn in. But you see our Lord's parable, as recorded in St. Matthew, is not this. The householder goes early in the morning and sees some people waiting to be hired and he hires them *all*. Then he goes out later, and he sees quite a different set of people, for it is said in the parable, "He went

out about the third hour and saw OTHERS standing idle in the market-place." So these had evidently never heard his call before ; and then when he went out at the eleventh hour the labourers in the market answered him, "Because no man hath hired us."

Now, my brethren, is there any one here who is putting off coming to his Saviour, and working out his salvation, because he thinks that he can be accepted at any time before he dies?—for he reads that these labourers were called at the eleventh hour and received the same wages as those which were called at the first.

How are you wresting God's word to your destruction! These labourers hired at the eleventh hour had never heard the call of the householder before ; they had never been hired before. But can any of you say that? So far from this, you have been called from your childhood. When you first heard of God you were called. When you first heard of heaven and hell you were called. Every time you have been to church and heard the minister say, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," or, "If we say that we have no sin," you were called. Every time you have heard the invitation to the Lord's Supper you have been called. If you have been to a school and your teacher has talked to you about religion, and the state of your soul,

you have been called. You were called when you were confirmed, and you know well how you have stifled first this internal call, and then that. Every time the importance of religion, or the blessedness of the true Christian, or the eternal misery of the lost—every time thoughts of these things rose up in your heart, it was God's voice calling you. But, at all events, if you have never been called before, I will discharge my own conscience, and call you now. In the name of Him whose commissioned minister I am, I call upon you now to be reconciled to God. I call upon each one of you before me to come, and work in God's vineyard—that is, I call upon you to begin in very deed the working out of that salvation of which God has given you the earnest by having grafted you into His Church. I call upon you to remember Whose you are, Who has bought you, Who has shed His blood for you, and why He has shed His blood for you. I call upon you to remember that you were in your baptism buried with Christ, that you might walk in newness of life. I call upon you to remember the promise and vow then made in your name, and which every time you have been catechized you have declared you were bound to fulfil. I call upon you to remember your confirmation—how, in the presence of God and of His Church, you said audibly “I do” when the bishop asked you in

your own person to renew your promise and vow. In the name of Him who gave His body and blood for you, I call upon you to prepare yourself for the Holy Communion, and to come to it for the strengthening and refreshing of your soul. If you are living in any open or secret sin, if you are living in malice or envy, I call upon you, as you value your soul, to put all this away, and "make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?" I call upon you, if you are now living without prayer, to begin to pray. I call upon you to begin family prayer. I call upon you to instruct your children in religion both by teaching and example.

Now remember, I have said all this, not only as one living amongst you who cares for your souls, but as the ambassador of my Master. You will not be able now to plead at the last day, "No man hath hired me," for I have called you this day; and I further call you by distinctly telling you in God's name, that no matter what sins you have committed, God will forgive them, if you turn to Him through His Son. And I further tell you, that no matter what sins you are under the power of, God will break the yoke of those sins from off your neck, if you will pray earnestly for His Spirit, and use the means of grace faithfully, and cultivate the garden of your soul laboriously and diligently.

But we must now consider what this para-

ble actually teaches, for we have sufficiently considered what it does not teach. In order to do this we must go back to the previous chapter, the nineteenth, for you cannot hope to ascertain the scope of the parable till you understand how it naturally arises out of something which is said by our Lord in the latter part of the previous chapter.

A certain young man who had great possessions had been bidden by our Lord to sell all and follow Him. This was too hard for him, and he went away sorrowing. This occasioned our Lord's warning against the danger of riches, and the astonishment of the disciples at a truth so contrary to all that they had looked for in the Kingdom of the Messiah. Peter, upon this asks, "Lo! we have forsaken all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" Our Lord promises a most abundant reward for their self-sacrifice: "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Then He extends His promise of recompense to all who in any age should follow these examples, but then proceeds most emphatically to warn them and us that God, in carrying out all this, will not allow His kingdom and its glories to be a matter of worldly calculation, but that from first to last it is to be of free grace. "Many," says He, "that are first shall be last, and the last first. FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder," &c.

Now I think we cannot fail to read the lesson that our Lord meant to teach us. He means to teach us, by a very striking example indeed, that the rewards of God's kingdom are a matter of grace and gift—not of purchase. The householder made a bargain with the labourers whom he first hired, and with these only. All the rest were to receive "*what was right*." He engaged those first hired on their own terms, and all the rest came in on his terms, and they fared the better for this. Such is the lesson of the parable.

I do not believe that we can affix any particular significance to the various hours at which the labourers were hired. I have shown that it is next to impossible to interpret them as being the different times of life in which men become religious; and it appears to me very unsatisfactory indeed to explain those first hired as the Jews, and the remainder as various Gentile nations, called to the Gospel some at earlier, some at later periods, for the whole context of the parable points to an individual rather than to a national application.

What our Lord intends to impress upon us is, the principle on which the householder gives his money. He wrongs no man, and yet he does what he will with his own. He wrongs no man, for those who were first hired got what they bargained for, and yet he does what he will with his own money. It was

his will to give those who had trusted to his generosity more than their due, and he does so. The whole parable, then, is spoken with reference to what St. Peter had asked, "What shall we have, for we have forsaken all?" It is as if our Lord answered, "Do not rely on this; you can make no bargain with God. If you treat with Him in a bargaining spirit, you will spoil all, just as these first hired labourers did. They had what they bargained for, and yet they were paid last and went away with a reproof for their evil eye; whilst those who were hired last, but had thrown themselves on the householder's generosity, were paid first." What, then, will destroy any such self-seeking, envious, mercenary spirit in you? One thing—a true sense of your sins and your sinfulness, a true view of God's greatness and your nothingness, of God's goodness and your vileness. Only get this, which all ought to have, and you will be but too glad to throw yourselves upon God's mercy. You will make no self-righteous bargain, but look upon all as a free gift, which indeed it is. You will wonder that God condescends to employ you at all. You will from your inmost soul confess yourself less than the least of all His mercies, and of all the grace that He has shown to you His servant.

SERMON X.

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL.

GENESIS iii. 5.

“God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

I INTEND, in dependence upon God's blessing, to dwell this evening upon the fall of our first parents—why God permitted it, how it took place—and I shall endeavour to show that the account of it in God's word is not an allegory, story, or fable, veiling something deeper or truer, but that it bears every mark of being an exact record of what actually took place, a narrative thoroughly consistent with itself and with the circumstances in which we may reasonably suppose the first of such a race in such a world as ours would be placed.

When God created man at the first He created him very good. He created him, then, with every faculty of body and soul just in the state that it should be. His body was strong, vigorous, active, having no seeds of disease or decay in it. His body, too, must have been in subjection to his mind, his reason, his better part. There was no striving of the inferior desires of his body against the superior judg-

ment of his reasonable soul. For instance, he had no temptation to eat or drink beyond what was required for the sustenance of his body. His spirit, too, must have been in the state in which God intended it to be, so that it should delight in having communion with its Maker. God had made the spirit of man capable of discerning Him and conversing with Him, and so, no doubt, man's spirit before the fall loved God who had so loved him as to give him such a beautiful world to live in, and set him over all the other works of His hands. It is evident also, that God created Adam with other high faculties of soul. He created his soul very wise, searching, and intelligent. This is quite clear from the fact that God entrusted to Adam the naming of all the inferior creatures;* and it is said that "whatsoever Adam called any living creature that was the name thereof." Now we must remember, that in the language which, no doubt, Adam spoke—for his own name and the name of his wife are words of that language—the name of almost every thing is derived from some distinguishing quality which it possesses; so when Adam gave a name to each animal, he did it not at random, but on account of something that he perceived in it, which made it to differ from all other creatures. In this God

* Aut qui primus, quod summæ sapientiæ Pythagoræ visum est, omnibus rebus imposuit nomina?—*Cicero, Tusc. Disp. i. 25, 62.*

gave Adam power and wisdom to do as He had done; for as God gave names to the light and the darkness, and the earth and the seas, so Adam in like manner "gave names to all cattle, and the fowl of the air, and the beast of the field." So that when the various creatures were brought to Adam, the wisdom that God had given him made him see in a moment that peculiarity of the creature which distinguished it from all other kinds.

So, then, man was created very good in all respects—having a perfect body in perfect subjection to the spirit, and having a soul or spirit that loved God and conversed with Him, and understood at a glance the wonders of that creation with which he was surrounded. The question now arises, Why did not God so order matters that this happy state of things should continue? Now there is, as I have no doubt the more intelligent of you are aware, an unfathomable depth connected with this, and a thousand things may be asked about it that no man, however great his wisdom or spiritual insight, can even attempt to answer; still there is an aspect of this matter from which some needful instruction may be gathered, though we do not dive into the depth, or attempt to answer any one question which really touches the mystery.

Why, then, did not God so order matters that all this should continue? Why did He

allow Adam to be tempted? Why did He not uphold him under the temptation? Because God desires that those creatures to whom He has shown Himself, and who are capable of choosing Him, should choose Him by trusting in Him. So all God's intelligent creatures, no matter what they are, must show their trust in Him. They must show that they know and feel that God is wiser than themselves, and so can order for them better than they can order for themselves. It seems reasonable that God should demand this sort of trust from reasonable creatures who are capable of knowing Him. But how was Adam to show this trust? We show this faith or trust by keeping God's commandments when we are tempted by our evil nature to disobey God; for instance, when we are tempted to do wrong by our evil nature, or our evil companions, we say in ourselves, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? God has redeemed me in order that I may be happy for ever, so no matter what the pleasures of the sin, I must not indulge in it. My God and my Saviour knows best, and He forbids it." But you see that Adam could not have been tried by the wish to do any of the evil things by which we destroy our souls, for this reason, that he had no inclination to them. For instance, he had no inclination to kill, for there was no death; indeed, he had

no feeling akin to malice or revenge before he fell, so that there was nothing in him that could induce him to break such a commandment as the sixth. So with the eighth; he had no inclination to take the property of another, because all his wants were supplied in profusion. How was he, then, to be tried? How was he to show his trust in his Maker—that his Maker knew better than he did? Now, God had given to Adam an occupation, which was to dress and keep the garden in which He had placed him; that must have been the *natural*—indeed, we may almost say, the only—occupation open to him under such circumstances, for if you run over in your minds the different occupations by which men now employ themselves, or get their living, you will see that it was impossible that Adam should pursue them. God would not have made him a carpenter or a builder in a state of things where houses are not required. We live in houses because of the inclemency of the elements—because of the deadly dews of the night air; but if we were not subject to disease and death, and if the air were always balmy and serene, we should want no houses, and none to build them. So he could not have been a soldier, when there was no war; nor a sailor, since Eden was far from the sea; and he could not have been a physician, because there was no disease; nor a lawyer, because there

were no quarrels, nor courts of justice ; nor a statesman, because there was as yet no kingdom nor constitution : so that, in fact, the only thing that he could have had for an employment was the one which God provided for him ; and it was an employment eminently suited to his reasonable soul, for it was the employment that of all others would show him most of the works of his Maker. As he went from place to place in the garden which God had given him to dress and to keep, he would see, in the infinite variety of living creatures on all sides, the wisdom and the glory of the Creator.

Well, but how was he to be tried ? He was to be tried as we are, and as was natural and fitting, in the way of his daily life and occupation. God gave him the fruit of the various trees of the garden for his food, and He gave him the whole of the garden to keep and to dress, but in the middle of this garden He placed a tree to try his obedience. This tree was in the midst of the garden, *i. e.* it occupied some commanding place in it. It was pleasant to the eye, no doubt, both in foliage and fruit. And God, to try the strength of Adam's virtue, commanded him to abstain from the fruit of this one tree,—“ Of all the trees of the garden thou mayst freely eat, but of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it.” Now you will say : Seeing that Adam had

all the other trees of the garden, there could have been little or no temptation to him to pluck of the fruit of this one tree except through the strong desire of his carnal appetite; and his appetite was in subjection to his reason or he would not have been in a state of innocence. But what was the name by which God called this fatal tree? He called it "the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." "The Tree of Knowledge." A tree, that is, by the mere eating of which Adam would increase in knowledge. Here must have been a great temptation to Adam as having a soul filled with all knowledge of all God's works in this world. When he passed this tree in his state of innocence and saw it tower above all the rest of the trees, and saw the beauty of its leaves, and the fruit pleasant even to the eyes of him and his mate, accustomed as they were to forms of beauty, he must have unconsciously said within himself, "What can, then, this 'evil' be which I do not know? I know all about the earth and the water, and their inhabitants—I know all about the plants and the living creatures with which I am surrounded—I know how they live and sustain themselves, but what is this 'evil' concerning which one taste of this fruit would enlighten me?" and then he would at once conquer all desire for this knowledge by saying, "Whatever it is, it is far better that I should not know it, for in order to

know it I must disobey my Maker. He has said that I must not eat of this fruit, and if I do not eat of it I cannot know what evil is—so I must trust my Maker that He knows what is right better than I do.” Now, if Adam had continued in this mind he would have stood upright; he would have grown in God’s grace or favour; he would have shown that his virtue was proof, not only against the desires of his flesh—that is, his desire to gratify his palate with the lovely fruit—but against the desires of his *mind* or *spirit*—that laudable desire of increasing in knowledge, which only in the case of the knowledge of this one thing “evil” he could not attain to without disobeying his Maker.

How, then, came he to fall? The Scriptures tell us that before God created man He had created glorious spiritual beings called angels; and the Scriptures lead us to believe that God acted with angels when He made them as He acted with man when He made him. When He made man He put him into a state of trial; and into such God had once put the angels. They had some temptation presented to them, which temptation apparently was to exalt themselves above the place in which God had placed them. This we learn from a passage in St. Jude, where we read of the fallen angels having in the time of their trial not kept their first estate, but left their own habitation.

What were the circumstances of the temptation and fall of some of the angels we know not; God hath hid it from us. We only know the fact, that the angels all had their day of probation—that some stood in the time of trial, and are now the messengers of God's mercy to us, and will be our happy companions in eternity—and some fell in the day of trial and are now our tempters to evil, and rejoice when they can involve us in the same ruin in which they are hopelessly and eternally plunged.

These good angels were not confined to heaven, neither were the evil angels shut up as yet in hell; they had power to range over the creation of God; and the chief among them, the most cunning, and the most powerful, took upon himself to tempt our first parents. He did this, as we read, by entering into the serpent, and making him the minister of his purpose. We are to remember that (if we take the latter part of this chapter for our guide) the serpent was not, when it was first created by God, by any means the poisonous, malignant, and degraded thing that it is now. It was probably the most beautiful of creatures, just as it is now the most loathsome. It was then also the most subtle and intelligent, whereas it is now the least so, I believe, of any creature upon earth. There is every probability, too, that it was then a winged creature, or at least having powers of

moving from place to place very different from those which it now possesses. We gather all this from the curse pronounced upon it. If it was cursed above all beasts of the field, it must have been once blessed above all; if it was condemned to crawl in the dust, it must have had very different ways of moving about previously. In fact, it must have been the living creature nearest to man, or Satan would not have chosen it for his purposes. He, no doubt, fixed upon one whose extreme intelligence being well known to Eve would the less startle her and raise her suspicions of evil when she heard it speak. Our great national poet, Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," makes the serpent tell Eve that he received the gift of speech as well as of reason by having tasted of the tree of which God commanded them not to eat. But I think we need scarcely have recourse to such an explanation to account for Eve's not being surprised and put on her guard, for we must remember that it was yet the infancy of the world. Such a thing would startle us; whilst it might not have alarmed one who knew that she had herself been created by her Maker only a very short time before, and who was every hour learning some new and wonderful thing respecting the works of God.

We must remember that a knowledge flowed into the minds of our first parents in a few

months, perhaps weeks, many times greater than that which the wisest of men now living has amassed in a life-time.

The devil having found an instrument to suit him, commences the temptation. His first approach is subtle indeed. He instils unbelief and distrust in God. He affects surprise that God should not have been more generous to them. "Yea," says he, "hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Now the great probability is, that we have only a very short account of what passed between Eve and the serpent. From what he says afterwards, he had very probably told her that though God had given them the earth and all things in it, yet that He had withheld from them far more than He had given; for He had made them men and not gods. Satan told Adam and Eve that under God there were other gods having far greater power and far more wonderful knowledge than man, in that they knew both good and evil. Then, when Eve inquired respecting these higher beings having this greater knowledge, he put a question to her to fix her mind upon the one prohibition, and to insinuate that God had some sinister motive in prohibiting them from eating this fruit. "Yea," says he, "hath God said ye shall not eat? You told me how much God loves you; how good He has been to you; how He has given you

all things. How then is this? Has He said 'ye shall not eat'? What could induce Him to withhold from you any fruit of any tree?" To this Eve replies, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the one only tree, the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'" To this Satan replies, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." This is as if Satan said, "Never fear; ye shall not die. I know better than that. God wants to keep you down. God doth know that in the day ye eat of this tree your eyes shall be opened. You think you see, but you have no idea how little you know compared with what you would know if you but once tasted that fruit. It would be like new eyes to you; nothing then could be hid from you. You would know everything, for you would be as gods, knowing good and evil. That is the reason, the real reason, why God does not wish you to taste of it. He knows how you would be advanced by it; He grudges you this higher knowledge."

The tempter succeeded. The woman looked again at the tree. She saw it was good for food; and if good for food, why should it not be eaten? It was pleasant to the eye. How

could so fair a fruit be so noxious? And then, according to the very name that God gave to it, it would certainly endue those who tasted it with this most coveted knowledge of “*evil*.” She looked, she coveted; now, before she stretched out her hand to take the fruit, did she sin? Yes, she disbelieved. She disbelieved God. She allowed unbelief, distrust, to take possession of her soul; and that was the reason why Satan got the better of her still further. He instilled into her mind unbelief before he induced her to eat. If she had remembered God, if she had remembered that He saw her, if she had thought how good He had been to her and to Adam, and since He had shown such goodness to them, the vast probability was, that it was far better for them not to know about this evil the knowledge of which He desired them not to seek. If she had only even believed God’s threatening, she would not have eaten, and she would not have fallen. But did God carry out His threatening? Yes, the moment Adam and Eve committed sin they died. The seeds of death were sown in their bodies, and their souls at once died to God. The sign of this was, they fled from God. My brethren, a soul that flies from God, and that would hide itself from God, is a dead soul. If you are alive in the sight of God and good angels, if your soul lives in the Scripture sense of the word, then you *come* to God. You say to God

or to his Son, which is the same thing, "Lord, to whom shall we go but to Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." You hear the voice of Him who says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and you do come to Him. You draw near to Him in prayer. You draw near to Him in His Sacrament. You draw near to Him in His house. You draw near to Him by faith. Though you are on earth and He in heaven, you yet draw near to Him, for you lift up your heart to the Lord.

Whereas, on the contrary, if, when thoughts of God and Christ, and calls to repentance and the joy of a blessed, and the pains of a cursed, resurrection rise in your hearts, you put them out, this is your way of running and hiding yourself from the presence of your Maker, and this shows that you are dead—yet dead in His sight. What, then, must you do? You must "arise and go to your Father, and say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee." If you do this, your Father will meet you. He will welcome you back for the sake of that only-begotten Son of His who became your second Adam. Thank God that there is a second Adam! Thank God, that when the first Adam fell, and you fell in him, that He then promised a second Adam in whom you might rise again after your fall! Thank God, that in due time He sent

that second Adam, and gave Him the name of Jesus, because he saves His people from their sins! Thank God, that the second Adam, when He was tempted of Satan, committed no sin, as the first Adam did! Thank God, that this second Adam died for *all* sin—for the sin of the first Adam, and all and every sin that has been since committed by any child of the first Adam, *i. e.* for all the sins of the whole human race. Thank God, that the second Adam rose from the dead, and is now in heaven at God's right hand! Thank God for all this, and remember it all, and believe it all firmly at the right time—that is, in the time of temptation and distrust—so that you may drive back the tempter and trust in God, who has been so good to you in restoring you after your fall.

SERMON XI.

NOAH'S FAITH.

HEBREWS xi. 7.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

YOU will perceive that I have taken this text because the first lesson of this Sunday morning is upon the conclusion of the history of Noah—how the whole human race began anew, as it were, in his family. I shall first make a few, I hope not unprofitable, remarks upon the state of mankind before the flood, and then show how Noah was saved, as we are, by faith.

Now, first of all, let us consider the state of mankind before the flood.

In the end of the third chapter of Genesis, we read of God driving Adam out of Paradise, and condemning him to live a life of labour and sorrow instead of the happy life he had hitherto lived. We read also of another very remarkable thing, which was that God did not, as we should have expected, at once destroy Paradise, and uproot the tree of life, but He put at

the entrance of the garden "Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

In the fourth chapter we have the account of the family of Adam and Eve—how that this very first family had the stain of murder upon it. Think of this, my friends: the first man and first woman, who had been both created without sin, allowed sin to enter into their souls, and in this state of sin they begat children inheriting their corruption, and the eldest of these children, the first man ever born of woman, commits murder—kills his brother through envy.

We learn from this that the corruption of human nature is not the gradual slow growth of many centuries, but a poison that at once wholly corrupted the soul of man. The first family that ever existed was stained with the foulest crime that can be committed.

But we must pass on. The next chapter is one that I suppose most people seldom read. It is a chapter full of names of certain patriarchs who were born, lived so many years begat such a son, and died at such an age. There are two things recorded about these patriarchs, their names and their ages, and there the account ends. Now why were the names of these persons recorded? Because they were all the forefathers of Jesus Christ. It was God's will that we should have the

line of His Son, the Second Adam, traced in the Scriptures from the first Adam down through Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to David, and from David to Joseph and Mary, so that we might be certified that Christ is the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David.

But, besides the names, we have the ages of these patriarchs recorded; and from this we learn that the life of man then was prolonged to above nine hundred years.

We now come to the sixth chapter. In it we read that God looked down from heaven, and saw that the wickedness of man was great,—"the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually—and God repented that He had made such a race.

From the language of this chapter, it is certain that the wickedness of man was greater than it has ever been since. And I think that it was natural, if I may so say, that men should then be so much more wicked than ever they have been since, if we take into account the lengths of men's lives at that time. Consider what a degree of wickedness a man will reach now in his threescore years and ten, and think how this would be increased and multiplied if the same man had eight or nine

hundred years to grow wicked in. A man then three or four hundred years old would have all the fire of youth, and all the vigour and determination of middle life, united with the wisdom and experience of extreme age. Supposing, then, that a man were to go on serving the devil and growing in iniquity for six or seven hundred years, as was then possible, what a demon would he become!

Now, let us look at the opportunities that men had then of knowing God—what witness to Himself God had left among them. I mentioned to you just now that the average age of man at that time was nine hundred years, and the flood took place sixteen hundred years after Adam was created; but when God looked down and saw all this wickedness it was more—perhaps much more—than one hundred years before the flood, so that, in point of fact, every old man—indeed, almost every man of middle age—living at that time, could have seen the first father of mankind. That is, they must have seen him who was such a monument of God's displeasure, inasmuch as he had lost Paradise because of his one sin. And besides this, we never read of Paradise being destroyed; we never read of the cherubim being removed from its gates; so that, in all probability, there remained, for some generations, in the centre of the inhabited world this fair garden, with the Tree of Life towering over the other

trees in the midst of it, but the gates that led to it closed, and the cherubim, with the fiery sword, guarding them—so that men might, perhaps, climb to the neighbouring heights and see Paradise and the life-giving Tree which they had lost through sin. And yet, notwithstanding this, wickedness increased, so that God repented that He had made man. See, then, what witnesses these sinners before the deluge had, to keep before them the judgments of God. There was the first man amongst them to tell them with his own lips the story of his original righteousness and of his fearful fall through the craft of his enemy, and there was the sight of Paradise with its angel-guarded gates to confirm his story.

But in addition to this, we know of another witness whom God raised up. This was the patriarch and prophet Enoch. From what we read of him in the epistle to the Hebrews, his faith and holiness presented such a contrast to the general wickedness, that God thought him too good for such a world, and He took him away. The apostle Paul says of him, "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Here, then, was a man evidently raised up to be a wonderful example of faith in God; but besides all this, we have the testimony of another

apostle, St. Jude, that Enoch was a preacher of righteousness. He was a God-inspired prophet, and we have one of his prophecies yet remaining—"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Mark the words of this prophecy. It was delivered in the lifetime of the first man. Enoch was translated before Adam died, so we have a prophecy of the judgment of the last day in the lifetime of the first man. Observe, too, this prediction must have been delivered in a time of great and increasing wickedness, and yet it was delivered seven hundred years at least before the flood.

Observe, also, how the prophet threatens judgment upon those who spoke against God; so either the people in Adam's time must have been open blasphemers knowing who God was, and yet of set purpose speaking against Him, or perhaps the hard speeches of these ungodly sinners were their hard speeches against the people of God, for God accounts things spoken against those who bear His image as spoken against Him. If such be the interpretation, then we have another proof how contrary at all times religion and the world

are to one another—how he that is only born after the flesh persecutes him that is born of the Spirit.

And what a view we have, in this prophecy of Enoch, of the progress of sin in the race of man. Adam was not then taken to his rest, so mankind was literally but one family, and yet we have murder, we have violence, we have daring blasphemy against God Himself, or at least deadly hatred to His people, because they bear His image. We have the prophet of God threatening the coming of judgment, as if Christ was as much at hand then as He is now.

During seven hundred long years all this grows worse and worse, and so God determines to cut off this race, and to begin mankind afresh in Noah. He says to Noah, "Thee only have I found righteous in this generation." He bids him build an ark in order that he may save himself and his family from the destruction with which God is about to visit the world. The great probability is, that God gave this command to Noah a hundred years before He actually brought the flood upon the earth; so that the generation who were cut off had before them the sight of the slow and gradual building of this great ship, whilst Noah all the time was proclaiming to them a coming judgment. Now, my brethren, just picture to

yourselves this good and holy man spending years in putting beam to beam, and plank to plank, perhaps at some place far away from the sea. Imagine him, too, saying that he was doing all this in anticipation of a coming deluge, but this deluge, long, long delayed. Imagine the taunts and the jeers with which his toil would be greeted by the sinners around him—all the world against him, not one on his side, not a soul to stand by him and encourage him. Only his three sons and their wives, given to him more, no doubt, for his faith than for theirs. Think how the ungodly would scoff; think, too, of the prudent and sensible advice he would receive from his worldly-wise friends, for no doubt he had personal friends who believed the world rather than God. Think how they would remonstrate with him upon his enthusiasm—how they would say, “You cannot really be in earnest. You cannot really believe that God will destroy us *all*.” And then they would shake their heads when they spoke of him, and hint that he was not in his right mind: and yet he was right, and they, though they were all the world, were wrong—and they found it out when it was too late. When God shut him in, He shut them out, and the flood came and took them all away. When once the door was shut, it was shut to them for ever. No cries, no

tears, no calls for mercy were then of the least avail. One can imagine the multitudes who scoffed and jeered crowding on the hill-tops, and seeing the water rising and rising, and there was the ark floating upon it; but God had shut the door. The day of judgment had been long delayed, but it came at last; and then they believed when it was too late, and cried for mercy when it was the time for judgment.

My brethren, will there ever be a day like this upon earth again? Yes, there will. Jesus has told us so. He has said, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

And will there be ever again in the world the same unavailing cries of distress, the same repentance when too late, the same striving for life, when there is only death awaiting the sinner? Yes; yes; Christ says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the

door saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are." A day, then, will suddenly come upon all the world which for the suddenness of its judgment will be like the flood upon the sinners of old. Shall we be then safe in the ark of God's mercy or shut out? Let us ask ourselves the question, How will it be then with me? Ah! we must ask other questions first, How is it *now* with me? Have I entered in at the strait gate? Am I walking in the path of the world, or in the path of life? What evidence have I that my path is the narrow one? Does it entail any self-denial upon me, any struggle against sin, the world, and the devil? Is my path a difficult or an easy one? If it is an easy path, is it likely to be the narrow path that leadeth to life?

But we must now consider the faith and obedience of Noah, as declared in the text, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

We gather from this passage two things—first, that faith was the root of Noah's obedience; secondly, that by his faith he condemned the world. Let us take the latter first.

Noah, by believing in God's word and doing

steadily and perseveringly what God commanded him, condemned the world. And yet the world was apparently the greater. It was many millions to one ; but, after all, that one was right, and the millions were wrong—irretrievably wrong ; and Noah, by his preaching and by his building, condemned them. How did he do this? He was a witness to them of something from God, something good and holy, something heavenly, and something that looked not at the things seen, but at the things unseen.

My brethren, have you ever considered that the faithful holy life of any servant of God with whom you are acquainted is your condemnation—if, that is, you do not become like him? If there is a God above, that man is right, and you are fearfully wrong. Why is it, then, that you are thus wrong? How is it that you do not become like the true children of God in those ways in which they please God? It is because you do not believe, pray, strive, and watch. Remember that the true Christian has the same Bible that you have, but he reads it and prays over it, and you do not. That Bible contains the same general promises to all ; he accepts those promises and you do not. And by this he condemns you ; for what a condemnation is this to you that God has given you His word to be a light unto your feet, and a lamp unto your paths, and that you do not read it, or

come to hear it read ! What a condemnation, that God should give you promises, and that you should be quite unconcerned as to whether you are accepting them and claiming them or not !

Again, you and the true Christian have had the same baptism. You and he were equally made members of Christ when baptized. You had the same vows made on your behalf, how is it that he remembers those vows and abides in Christ, the true vine, and you do not ? He does so, he abides in that body into which he was then engrafted, he remembers that he must renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, because he calls upon God for His Almighty grace ; because he believes in the greatness and reality of all that Christ has done, and you do not. So he condemns you ; and surely it is a tremendous condemnation that you should have been made a member of Christ, and live as a member of the devil.

Again, the good Christian and the bad one come to church, and say the same prayers there, and join in the same creed ; but the one lives as if he believed in a Father Almighty, and a Crucified Saviour, and a Holy Ghost, and a resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting, and the other does not. Now what shall we think in eternity, when we see all things aright, of such a thing as a man professing to believe in God the Father, and yet never praying heartily to Him and trusting in

Him as the Father, or professing to believe in Christ crucified, and yet going on in that sin which brought Christ to the cross, and forgetting that Christ died, that he might not only be forgiven, but cleansed from all unrighteousness? Only think of a man professing to believe in the Holy Ghost, and yet living as if he had never heard whether there be any Holy Ghost! Only think of a man standing up and professing to believe in the life everlasting, and yet living as if this world would last for ever, and he live for ever in it! This is what the mere nominal Christian does, and what the real Christian does not; and so the one condemns the other, condemns him as one whose acts belie the professions of his lips. So that even here, long before the final judgment, the false Christian is condemned—condemned by the law of God, condemned by his own conscience, condemned by the holy life of his Christian neighbour, who walks worthy of the same calling, and receives not in vain the same grace of God.

But, in the last place, we must consider what the Apostle says was the principle that Noah had in him which made him thus please God, condemn the world, and inherit everlasting righteousness. The whole chapter, you know, from which my text is taken, is about faith; what it makes men do that really have it in them. "Faith," the Apostle

says, at the beginning of the chapter, "is the evidence of things not seen." Well, Noah had this evidence. God told him—perhaps by vision, perhaps by a voice, perhaps by an angel—that He would drown the world; and Noah took God at His word—"moved with fear," the Apostle says, "he prepared an ark to the saving of his house." He believed God when He threatened, and so he set about his great work, by which himself and his family, and the various races of living creatures, were preserved from destruction. His faith, you observe, moved him to godly fear. Now, my brethren, what did God particularly call upon Noah to believe? All that we *read** of is, that Noah believed that God would execute one single threat, and that was enough. It was by his belief that God would execute a certain judgment such as the world had never seen yet, that he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

* Of course I say nothing here of what Noah believed or did not believe respecting the Messiah, or the "life everlasting;" I am simply calling attention to the fact that God's Holy Spirit only mentions that by faith he was moved with fear, and this led him to build the ark, and so he became heir of righteousness by faith. If the Holy Spirit takes note of Noah's faith in God's threat, and *only* of that, why should we weaken the force of the illustration of faith He has seen fit to record by insisting that Noah's looking to Christ, or not trusting in his own righteousness, is really implied, though Noah's belief in a coming deluge alone is mentioned? Why should we assume to be more concerned

WE are also called upon to believe, but what does God call upon us to believe? He calls upon us to become heirs of the righteousness which is by faith, by believing not in Him as a God of judgment, but as the Father of Jesus Christ, who raised from the dead Him "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." If we truly believe this—if we had ever in our minds and hearts that the great God who made all things HAS reconciled the world to Himself by the sacrifice of His Only Son, and that this sacrifice of Christ HAS purchased each one of us in particular, so that we should be God's dear children, good and holy—if we truly believed this, we should build as Noah did, we should be all our lives building ourselves, and building our families, and building our neighbours, and building those whom we could influence, upon our most holy faith.

There could be no mistake about Noah's

for salvation solely by Christ, than the Spirit who came expressly to reveal Christ? I believe that it is mainly such wretched officious meddling with God's ark that has led to the "breach" of which "Essays and Reviews" are the portentous symptom. I believe that Noah was no Pharisee, that he did not look for transitory promises, and that the "name of Christ is the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and yet, if I hold the inspiration of Hebrews xi., I must hold that it was when Noah exercised a faith in a threatening of coming judgment, and acted thereon, that God made him "heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

having had some revelation given him which filled him with fear for the safety of his house ; there could be no mistake, too, about his *believing* it. There he was, preaching and building, and telling men what he was doing, and why, and bidding them take refuge with him from the coming storm.

And must it not be so with us if we truly believe what we profess ? If we believe what our Lord says respecting the coming judgment and the life everlasting, we shall assuredly be preparing for it. If we believe what our Lord and His Apostles say respecting the entrance into that life—that the gate is strait, and the way narrow—that we must cut off sins that have become as much parts of ourselves as our right hand or right eye—that we must deny ourselves and take up our cross—that our course is a warfare : and a warfare, if it is a real one, is no easy, painless, aimless thing, but a matter of life and death, for we kill our enemy, or our enemy kills us—if, I say, we believe all this—and all of it is certain from God's word—then we shall be acting accordingly ; we shall be like Noah, making visible evident preparation for a coming day which will usher us into a life—or death that will have no end.

SERMON XII.

THE RIGHT USE OF LENT.

JOEL ii. 18.

“ Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.”

THIS passage is taken from the Scripture which is appointed to be read as the epistle for Ash Wednesday—the Wednesday of the past week. It is also remarkable as being one of the passages of Scripture bearing on repentance with which the minister is directed to begin the daily service. I shall not occupy the time with considering the circumstances under which it was uttered by the inspired messenger of God more than to say that a great national calamity—no less than the total destruction of the fruits of the earth—had befallen the heritage of God; and this verse forms a part of the trumpet call by which the Prophet summons the people to humble themselves so that God might remove His hand from off them—but I shall not, I repeat again, dwell upon the circumstances under which it was spoken, for the text contains a truth in itself, quite independent of its context, quite independent of

the historical circumstances connected with its first utterance, and that truth is, that you and I are to repent and turn to God *because of His MERCY*. You and I are to rend our hearts—you and I are to turn to the Lord our God, not only because He is Holy, which He is,—and a Righteous Judge, which He is,—and a Consuming Fire, which, if you die in your sins you will most assuredly find Him to be—but because He is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.”

This, then, is a text peculiarly appropriate to the beginning of our Lenten fast. The Church calls us year by year, at a certain season, on which we have just now entered, to repent and turn to God—and why? Why at this time? Is there any public calamity, like that in the time of the Prophet Joel, always taking place just at this season? Is God now more than at any other time exhibiting His wrath? So far from this, we are bidden to rend our hearts and turn to God only because in the course of some six weeks we shall have brought before us, in the course of the Christian year, the greatest imaginable exhibition of God’s grace and mercy. In the course of some six weeks from this time we shall have, in the services of the Church, Jesus Christ “evidently set forth crucified among us;” for we shall have Good Friday, when the

Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world—when, in our commemorative service, He is “wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace is upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” We shall have also Easter Day, when He, who died for our sins three days before, rose again for our justification.

Now let us see as to the reason for our preparation for commemorating these great events by a course of humiliation, greater strictness, more frequent services, more sermons, and those sermons usually bearing on such subjects as self-examination, repentance, contrition, conversion.

What, first of all, is the reason why professing Christians are indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ upon their hearts? What is the reason why so many professing Christians are indifferent to the deepest exhibition of the love of God that the universe ever has seen, or ever can see? In order that we may escape the eternal wrath of God, the eternal Son of God assumed a nature capable of suffering, and in that nature lived a life of suffering, and then ended that life with a death of inconceivable agony. And the whole word of God, by which we profess to be guided, is full of this love of Christ in dying for us. It was foretold in some way or other by every prophet; the whole worship of

God's people of old was a foreshadowing of it. The costly sacrifices of the Jews, and their gorgeous ritual, were without meaning unless they foreshadowed Christ's death, atonement, and priesthood. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the great crowning fact of the New Testament if we look to its history ; and if we look to its doctrinal, or teaching part, we find that the reconciliation effected by Christ on the cross is made the one ground of the Christian's peace, as well as the one motive for the cheerful and loving performance of Christian duty.

How is it that men have such cold hearts towards Christ? Men that have warm hearts towards their friends and benefactors have cold hearts towards their greatest Benefactor. They take no pleasure in His service—no delight in His praise. God has told them in His word to "rejoice in the Lord," and when they come to church they profess to do so with their lips, but rejoice in Him in any real sense they cannot. They think that the fervent way in which some of their fellow-Christians speak or sing of His love and grace is cant or enthusiasm. Now, a great many of such people are by no means unbelievers. They believe much respecting their Saviour—they believe all the historical facts respecting Him, they confess His Person, and His work for

their salvation, Sunday after Sunday, in the creeds of the Church; they know, too, and are quite ready and willing to confess, that Christ alone can save them, and that if they are eventually saved it will be through Him, and Him alone. But here they stop, they stop short. Short of what? Why, of love to Him, of any real rejoicing in Him; and must we say they stop short of Him? They do not come to Him; they have no idea that they themselves are personally to accept His invitations. They can understand obeying Him as a master, and believing in Him as their Lord, and worshipping Him as their God; but they do not think of "knowing Him." They have no idea of communion with Him.

Now, my brethren, be you most careful to understand that if I have drawn a picture of the state of your souls, of which you recognise the likeness—be careful, I say, to remember that I do not for a moment pronounce upon the state of your souls as regards the bar of God's judgment; I do not say that you are in a lost state. I think untold harm has been done by men pronouncing their fellows to be lost because they have not gone through certain internal, mental, or spiritual processes. I find nowhere in my Bible that a man must feel so and so, then so and so, and then so and so, before you or I can pronounce upon his state of acceptance or rejection in the sight of

God. Understand, then, that I am not saying respecting you who are such as I have described, that you are in a lost or a saved state; but what I do say is, that you are in a most wretched state—a state in which, if your heart was right with God, the greatest and best Being in the universe, you would certainly be ashamed to be. You are, to say the best, in a lukewarm state. One has come down from heaven to earth to show you the love of God, to show you how God's heart yearns towards you, at what a price God values your love and your service, what an interest God takes in your eternal well-being. Well, I say, Jesus Christ, God's Son, shows you by His incarnation, sufferings, death, and intercession, somewhat of God's love towards you, and you are cool about it all. You believe it, you certainly do not disbelieve it, and yet your heart is unwarmed by it. I do not say that you are quite unmoved by all that God has done—I dare say you do many things that you would not do unless you had some practical knowledge of the religion of Christ—I dare say you leave undone many things that your carnal nature excites you to do, because you feel that God's eye is upon you—but still you are unwarmed.

If it be thus with you, you are in a very wretched state. I do not stop to discuss whether it is safe or unsafe—it is a wretched state. You

know the feeling that you have when a father or mother embraces a child, and the child makes no return to the parent's embrace—shows some obedience, perhaps—shows some respect it may be, but no affection, no love. Well, now, in the sight of the elect angels who love God and love your soul, that is just your case. God embraced you in the arms of His mercy when you were grafted into the Church of His dear Son. Christ is striving to draw you heart and soul to Himself and to His Father by His sufferings upon the cross. "I, if I be lifted up," He says, "will draw all men unto me." And you hang back. I dare say you believe all that the Bible says about Christ—at least, you acquiesce in it—I dare say you desire to do much that He tells you as your Master; but you see that there must be something more than this. It is a matter not only for your head and your hands and your lips, but for your *heart*. Christ says, "*If ye love me,*"—"greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." St. Paul speaks about "the love of Christ constraining"; St. Peter, about One "whom, not having seen, we love, and in whom, though now we see Him not, yet, believing, we rejoice;" St. John, "We love Him because He first loved us:" and the whole plan and work of redemption by Christ, on account of the wisdom, and the love, and

the power displayed in it, and also on account of the glorious issues of it, is a thing to be exulted in, rejoiced in. Just as our hearts glow when we sing a song of victory—a song about some hero with whom the honour of our country is bound up—so, on the same principle of human nature, our hearts ought to rejoice when, in some suitable and reverent hymn or psalm of praise, we sing or hear sung the praises of the Great Head of the Church, the Great Conqueror of our enemy, the Great Captain of our Salvation—our hearts, I say, would rejoice if they were really in their right place as respects the Great Head of the Universe.

It is to give an opportunity for this that the Church would have us say every morning in her service of daily prayer and praise: “Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation;” and in daily evening prayer: “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” These words are to mean something even on the lips of sinners such as we are. They are intended to be the sincere utterance of every Churchman, or why should we sing them in the public congregation? So with all the Canticles. “We praise Thee, O God.” “O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.” “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us.”

“ O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness.” “ Show yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands.” “ Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord ;” and again, “ Make Thy chosen people joyful.” We rejoice with trembling, it is true, but the trembling is no more to prevent the rejoicing than the fear in which we are to serve God, mentioned just before it, is to prevent our serving Him.

How is it, then, that the hearts of so many are so cold, so unmoved? and what is the remedy? The remedy is just this: we must have a knowledge of ourselves, and this, by God’s grace assisting, will lead to a knowledge of the Saviour. When a man, in real truth, knows himself, then he will flee in real earnest to his Saviour. When a man in real truth knows what sin is—his sin, his individual sin—when a man really knows and feels how wrong has been his neglect of God’s house and God’s day; how wrong his disobedience to his parents, and his unkindness to his own flesh and blood; how abominable in God’s sight his drunkenness, his excess, his uncleanness; how hateful his malice and envy; how very disgraceful to a baptized Christian his neglect of prayer and his forgetfulness of God—when a man’s eyes are opened to all this—and, let me add, when God reveals Himself to the soul as He

did to holy Job, who abhorred himself though God had borne testimony respecting him, that there was none like him on the earth, perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil—then the soul begins to be interested in such things as the power of Christ's cross, the surpassing worth of His atonement, the value of His intercession, the strength unto salvation of His body and blood, and the enlightening and kindling power of His Almighty Spirit. Now, I think all this will show you the reasonableness of Lent services and Lent humiliation, if you would keep Passion-week and Easter aright. If we are to keep such days as Easter Sunday and Good Friday in the spirit of what we then commemorate, we must keep them with the profoundest sense that we can possibly get into our souls, of the greatness of the work then wrought on our behalf, of the extreme urgency of our need of it, and of the unspeakable love of Him Who wrought it. It is on this account that such a time is to be preceded by a time of self-examination and self-denial, and of more frequent preaching, especially upon such subjects as repentance and conversion, or turning to God through His Son. When the Saviour came upon earth, His way was prepared for Him by one sent by God to preach *repentance*. And so, on the same principle, if, during the coming Passion-tide and Easter, you would more heartily and more

believingly and more lovingly sympathize with your Saviour in His humiliation, and join with Him in His triumph, it can only be by your abasing yourself for those sins of yours, which did their part in nailing Him to the cross, and which, together with the sins of your fellow-creatures, added to the bitterness of His cup.

Now, of course, you will not for a moment suppose from what I am saying that Lent is the only time for seeking repentance at God's hands, or Passion-week the only time for realizing the atoning sufferings of your Saviour. Unless, every time you bend your knees to God, you bring your sins before Him, and are unfeignedly sorry for them, or pray that you may be so, and are grieved and ashamed of yourself that you are not—unless, every time you bend your knees to God, you make particular mention in some way or other of the reconciliation effected by His Son—I am much afraid your soul is in evil plight. But there is a public recognition by the Church of such things as repentance for sin and reconciliation through Christ's blood, and justification through His resurrection; and as I have lately shown you how we recognise these all-important matters in our daily offering of prayer and praise, so do we also in our yearly round of fast and festival. Just as the Christian who repents the most thoroughly of his sins

enters the most deeply into the exhibition of the gospel that we have every Sunday,—just as the most sin-fearing and sin-hating Christian realizes more vividly, or is in the way of doing so, the presence and power of Christ in Holy Communion—so will it be with him in the exhibition of Christ's love in our redemption at Passion-tide and Easter. . And when you consider who Christ is, and what you are—when you consider that His love sought you out, and His blood bought you, and His power rules you, and His sentence will award you your eternal portion—surely it is worth something, some greater strictness, some more frequent attendance at divine worship even at inconvenient times and seasons,—if you can but enter more into such love as He has shown, and be more closely united to Him by a faith quickened by more prayer and by more constant hearing of holy things.

By the presence, to-day, in this church of the Volunteer Rifle Corps of this town and neighbourhood, I am reminded of another use of this season of humiliation. We have, this morning, worshipping amongst us those who have responded to the call of their country, and whose services have been accepted by their Sovereign, to assist in the defence of all we hold dear if our soil should ever be trampled on by a foreign foe. To them I would now say, Your hearts I doubt not, my brethren, are

resolved to do your duty to your country if she should require your services; but how are you to make your services efficient? You know better than I can tell you that in this your new pursuit, as in all others, there is only one way to excellence—you must take pains, you must accustom yourselves to endure fatigue, you must master the use of your weapons. When there is no enemy at hand, nor likely to be, you must yet act as if there were, or you will very likely be in an evil plight when there really is one.

Now, in going through all this, you teach both yourselves and us a lesson, and that is, that if we would effectually resist our spiritual enemies, we must have times for extra duty—extra watchfulness, extra labour, extra self-denial, extra prayer and instruction. It stands to reason that we must. You will find, if you read the lives of all great and good Christians, that they always have had such times, and that if they belonged to bodies of Christians who did not publicly recognise such times they made them for themselves. The Church has wisely incorporated into her Christian year one such period—indeed, we may say, two. For our soul's sake, then, let us make due use of these opportunities. Remember that the New Testament is a true book—written in a true spirit—there is nothing unreal, nothing overstrained in it. Now, if this is so, as unques-

tionably it is, then what the Saviour and His apostles say about Christians being in danger, and having fierce and deadly, though unseen, enemies, and having to endure hardness as good soldiers, and having to be ever on their watch, ever awake, must be true. It is said in real, sober, solemn earnest, and we must take it so; and if we do we shall thankfully make use of such times as Lent for exercising ourselves in self-denial, in self-examination, in self-abasement, in everything that may make us conquerors in that—I was going to say life and death conflict; I must add a word—in that *eternal* life and eternal death conflict in, which, whether we know it or not, we are all engaged.

SERMON XIII.

CHRIST'S WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY.

LUKE xxi. 33.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away : but My words shall not pass away.”

IN these words, my brethren, we have God our Saviour speaking to us. It is the voice of God. He could have been no mere man who could thus stand up amongst His fellows and say with truth that heaven and earth should sooner dissolve, and become as if they had never been, than that one of His words should fail. No, He who could say such a thing must be either God or a deceiver. He was no deceiver. There is truth stamped upon everything that He said. If ever words can commend themselves to our souls as true words, they are His words ; we feel when we read them that He is “the Truth.” There is a something about Him and His words that tells us that there is no deception in Him. I believe that none of us can read the words of Christ, or hear them, without a secret belief that they are true. We may put the words from us, we may refuse

to entertain them, but we have all the time a misgiving that we are doing so at our peril; and we have a secret hope that Christ will some day or other compel us to accept and obey His words.

Yes, my brethren, Christ is true, and says the truth, and there is no change in Him; and so these words are the words of One Who had authority to say them, and power to make them good to the world, and to the Church, and to you, and to me.

Let us, in humble dependence upon His assisting grace, consider how certain words that He has spoken respecting Himself, and His enemies, and His Church, have not passed away, but have been fulfilled; and then apply all this to other words of His which we require faith to lay hold of, to appropriate to ourselves, and to receive in their fulness.

Now, first of all, certain words that He said respecting Himself did not pass away, but were fulfilled in their season. He told His disciples what appeared to them a most unlikely thing. He told them that, though He was the long-expected Messiah, the God-sent prophet for whose coming they and their countrymen were all looking, yet that He should be put to the most shameful of deaths and after that rise from the dead. I shall not dwell upon the fulfilment of these

words, as it is an Easter Sunday rather than a Lent subject; you know, however, that, blessed be God, these words of His did not pass away. We are here this day in this place worshipping God through Him because His words came true. It was because Christ was as He had foretold—crucified and raised again—that we are here on a Sunday, the first day of the week, in a Christian church, praising and glorifying God for His love.

I will pass on to other words of His. Let us consider what our Lord was saying and doing when He said “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” He was sitting with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, looking over Jerusalem, and its magnificent temple towering far above the rest of the city. The disciples had been saying to Him, “Master, look what stones and what great buildings are here!” And He had told them, “As for these things which ye behold, the days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down.” He told them, too, that this city—the home of their religion, the place where their tribes went up to worship God at their solemn feasts—should be “compassed with armies,” and that “Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

How unlikely was all this to come to pass ! no-

thing more unlikely at the time could be imagined. First of all, let us take His words respecting the stones of the temple, that "one stone should not be left upon another." Think of the enormous size that some of these stones are said to have been by those who had seen them. There are, I have read somewhere, one or two yet remaining in the foundations that strike beholders with wonder as to how a people not very advanced in mechanical arts should have been able to put them into their places.

Many of those before me have, at some time or other, seen the cathedral church of this diocese, or some other one of our huge cathedrals. Conceive a man rising up and saying that, in about twenty years' time, that building which looks as if it were some hill that had been hewn out into a church, should be levelled with the ground! Christ said this very thing of the Temple of Jerusalem, and it came to pass. After the legions of Rome had subdued the devoted city and put its inhabitants to the sword, they were employed in destroying that goodly Temple so that no vestige of it might remain, and this by the express order of the Emperor, in order that the Jews should have no tie left to bind them to the spot where their fathers worshipped.

But this is not all that we have to say respecting this matter. If ever there was a building

which we should have said was more unlikely than another to be thus destroyed, it was this temple ; for if ever there was a place that God had taken under His special protection it was this. It was the place where He had "set His name." It was the one only temple on the face of the earth where it was lawful to worship the One True God in the sacrificial way He had Himself appointed. If ever place was guarded by angel hands, it must have been this. But the worshippers had rejected Him to whom all its types and shadows bare witness, and so God a second time cast off His dwelling-place. You have heard of the supernatural signs and portents that heralded the destruction of this temple—there can be little doubt of their truth ; they are related to us by those who did not believe in Our Lord and who had every reason for concealing them—how that just before the temple was taken there was heard through its courts the rustling of wings, and unearthly voices said one to another, "Let us depart hence," as if God was summoning away for ever the angel-guards that had kept watch and ward in His earthly dwelling-place.

And then, too, as regards the Jewish people, who could have conjectured that they would again be scattered? They had kept themselves for many hundred years from the particular sin of idolatry, which had brought

the wrath of God upon their forefathers. Their religion was protected by the Roman government. From all that we can read, their chief priests were able to exercise considerable power, and to persecute those whom they considered heretics against the law of Moses. What reason had they to rebel, especially when they considered the chances of success against such a people as the Romans? But though it was so unlikely, yet they did rebel, and their rebellion brought about the fulfilment of Christ's words respecting their city being "trodden under foot of the Gentiles."

Thus Christ's words respecting Himself and His enemies came to pass. Now let us consider some words of Christ respecting His Church. He had said respecting His Church, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field: which, indeed, is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (Matt. xiii. 31, 32.) In these words our Lord predicts that His Church should have the smallest and most insignificant of beginnings, just like a little seed, but that it should grow from this to such size and importance that the kingdoms of this world should take refuge under the shadow of it; *i.e.*, they should feel

that they could not do without the Christian faith, as it is the only thing that makes men good and true subjects and citizens here, because it alone teaches them with authority, that upon their behaviour in this life depends their eternal state.

Well, look at the insignificant beginnings of the Christian Church. Look at the little handful of men that were then around our Lord, asking him about these future events. There was not a learned nor a powerful man amongst them, not one that had anything to recommend him save a simple heart and a blameless life. There was not an eloquent man among them. They were, in the eyes of the rulers at Jerusalem, simple country folk, whose speech showed that they came from a distant and rude province. As soon as they began to preach and teach they excited intense dislike and active opposition. The miracles which they were empowered to perform never saved them from cruel persecution. How could such men overturn all the old religions of the Roman Empire? Nevertheless, it was so. In the course of two or three hundred years the heathen temples were deserted, and in every city there was a bishop, with his staff of priests and deacons, exercising authority over a great and increasing proportion of the people of the place, baptizing men into the fellowship of this humble-looking Man who was then

sitting on the Mount of Olives, teaching them His doctrine, professing to exercise authority in His name, and to feed men with His body and His blood.

Of a truth, my brethren, Christ's words have not passed away. They have been fulfilled in their season. God has made good what His Son said respecting Himself—respecting His enemies—respecting His people and His Church.

Seeing then, that such words of Christ have come true—seeing, too, that His whole Divine Mission depends upon the fulfilment of all His words, no matter how unlikely—let us see to other words of His, which we may depend upon it He will make good; for it is respecting every word of His that He says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Let us, in doing this, draw attention to some words of Christ which the whole current of religious thought and feeling of the present day seems to have set aside as if they had passed away—as if the unchangeable Saviour had changed His opinions or His views, and so even religious people think that these His words have no present meaning nor present application.

We are now in the midst of the season of Lent—the great forty days' fast set apart as a time of preparation for the Easter festival.

This is ordained by the Church as a season of special prayer and special fasting, or self-denial, and if so, of special almsgiving, for it is, of course, preposterous to deny ourselves, and apply to our own use what we save by self-denial. Let us take some of Christ's best known words. I think all will agree with me that no words of Christ's are better known than those called the Sermon on the Mount. In the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, which is, as you know, a part of that Sermon, we have our Lord speaking of three Christian duties—viz., of almsgiving, of prayer, and of fasting. Have His words respecting these passed away? I am afraid that many people think that they have. Let us, however, see what these words of Christ respecting these duties are.

First our Lord says, "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly." Observe here that the Redeemer and Judge of men, who died for sinners, and by whose righteousness alone they stand in God's sight, says distinctly that they who do alms—i. e., give money, or clothes, or food, or anything else of their substance in a Christian way, not for ostentation, but for the relief of distress—shall have a reward in the sight of men and angels at the last day. And I need not say that this is not the only

place where He says this. Think of some other texts: "Lay not up," He says, "for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." This can have but one meaning, viz., that deeds of love and charity done in a Christian spirit are sure to be found again, with (I use the expression with the utmost reverence) God's interest added to them, just as money put into safe earthly securities will be found again with the interest added to it that was stipulated for.

Again, in another well-known place,—the account of the widow casting in the two mites, and, by so doing, giving more than all the rich, because they gave of their abundance, and she of her poverty cast in all her living—our Lord teaches the common sense principle on which God will calculate, as it were, in these matters; so that the poorest, by giving in proportion to their scanty means, may have as good an opportunity of glorifying God, and of being rewarded for so doing, as those to whom God has given abundance.

Again, remember the frequency with which our Lord inculcates this duty of "giving." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell

that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." (Luke xii. 32, 33.) Again: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke xvi. 9.) Again: "Give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." (Luke xi. 41.) Again: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 13, 14.) Again; hear our Lord's account of what will be His own procedure at the last judgment: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.*" (Matt. xxv. 34, 35.) Lastly: "Whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) It is perfectly manifest that such words as these, if they are words of Christ, will never pass away. A time will come—how soon you know not—when you will find that Christ meant what He said. They are all in your Bibles, in the four Gos-

pels. He who said them remembers them, and He takes notes of every instance in which a man remembers them, and acts upon them. The man himself has forgotten it, but Christ has not. And Christ will have all men before Him to receive for the deeds done in the body, and He will have an eternal kingdom, and an infinite number of mansions and good things in it at His disposal, and this kingdom will last for ever, and He will have legions upon legions of angels to carry out every decision He comes to; so you see that there is no chance of these His words respecting the rewards of unostentatious almsgiving not coming true. And yet men treat these words as if they had passed away; * whereas they can no more pass away than an invitation of Christ's, such as "Come unto me, all ye that travail," can be accepted in vain. Many persons, in commenting upon these texts, so fritter them away—put in so many reserva-

* Notwithstanding the immense income of some of our religious societies, and the sums spent by some noble-minded men upon churches and their decoration, I believe that there scarcely ever was a time in the history of the Church in which men's charity cost them so little, or in which the aggregate of almsdeeds and religious benefactions bore so miserable a proportion to the wealth and resources of the country. If any doubt this, let them read the article in the *Quarterly Review* for April, of this year, (1861,) on "Religious Destitution," or a tract by the Rev. J. H. Gurney, entitled, "Much Said and Little Done: A Few Plain Facts for Rich Men to think about."

tions with a view to correct any false views of human merit that we are supposed to be in danger of drawing from them—as to rob them of almost all their force, whereas nothing can alter their meaning or application; they are as plain as words can be, and are addressed to all. No words of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, for instance, respecting justification by faith, or our being found at the last not having our own righteousness, can in the least alter or do away with the force of these words of Christ respecting Christian liberality, and its reward at the hands of God the Father at the last day. The words of St. Paul may serve to correct a false notion that some persons are accused of drawing from them,—that we can buy heaven with our almsdeeds, that the rewards of eternity are a matter of bargain—and that if we give away so much it will stand us instead of Christ's blood and acceptance in Him; but I am sure that it would disturb the happiness of the blessed Apostle himself if he were to know it, that any words of his should be used to correct or qualify those of his Divine Master; as if the unreserved acceptance of Christ's words would lead Christian people to think that to do Christian acts of charity, looking for the fulfilment of His express promise, tended to self-righteousness.

I suppose, from the way in which commentators, and preachers, and teachers, caution

Christians against buying heaven by almsgiving and charity, that a great many persons are infected with this notion. I am bound to say, however, that in my experience as a minister, I never met with such a case.

But we must go on to our Lord's words respecting prayer.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Now this is only one of a multitude of like promises given us among the words of Christ. You all remember, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 11.) And, again, with a remarkable variation, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 13.)

Again, remember the parable of the importunate widow who conquered by her continual crying to the judge that "feared not God, nor regarded man." (Luke xviii. 2.) Again, the words: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you;"—again, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full;"—again, "Whatsoever ye shall

ask in My name, that will I do." (John xvi. 23, 24 ; xiv. 13.)

We shall find that these words, my brethren, have not passed away, and will not pass away. We are sometimes tempted to think that they have, but then, from some answer to our prayers which we unexpectedly receive, we have an assurance that they have not. We shall assuredly find at the last day that no real prayer to God is waste of breath, as some seem to think who pray not. Every prayer is registered by God ; every prayer is remembered by Him. If He has not answered it, it is, we may be sure, the more safely recorded ; so that if He sees good not to grant the particular thing asked for in this life, He may the more certainly and abundantly make it up, and make good His promise at last. Oh ! my brethren, what then are our prayers ? What were our prayers this morning ? Have we prayed this day in any other words except the form of sound words provided in the public service of the Church ? I think I may safely say, that if we have this day merely gone over with our lips the public prayers of the Church—and between times have not put up any prayers to God—our prayers in Church have been only lip-service. I believe that, if our prayers in Church are real and hearty, we shall pray the more in secret access to God, and in our retirement.

Let us, then, by remembering Christ's promises respecting prayer, stir up ourselves to pray more ; and let us lay better hold on these promises by remembering that they, like all other words of Christ, shall never pass away.

And then, with regard to Christ's words respecting fasting—"Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—Have these words passed away? The Christian world, as it is called, seems to think that they have ; at least we must judge so from the utter silence respecting them in all its organs from which we can gather its views on religious matters, its popular tracts circulated by millions, and its newspapers and periodicals, from all which any allusion to this Christian duty, and the words of Christ which embody it, are carefully excluded. We may take it for granted, then, that the world thinks that these words of Christ have passed away, and that we shall hear no more about them. Evidently, however, the Church does not think that these words of Christ have lost their force and application, for she directs them to be read as the Gospel for Ash Wednesday. So that, on the first day of the Church's great yearly fast, we are solemnly reminded of the binding

obligation of this Christian duty—*i. e.*, of these words of Christ.

Let us not then, my brethren, be afraid of the world, even though it may be called the *religious* world. Let us not be afraid of obeying the words of our Redeemer, even though we may for so doing be called Tractarians, or Papists, or Formalists, or Pharisees. Let us deny ourselves in some definite way—some pleasant food or some innocent indulgence: let us do something by way of beginning, and let us give what we save by this to the cause of God, or to the poor and needy. It is late to begin this Lent, but Passion week is coming on; and if we never begin, if we never learn to exercise ourselves in this way, then we shall never get the blessing—*i. e.*, if Christ's words are yet abiding—if they have not passed away.

Lastly, Easter tide is, of course, one of the great seasons for the celebration and reception of Holy Communion, and so I would say to all of you here, that the blessed words of our Redeemer respecting the Sacrament of His body and His blood have not passed away.

The blessed memorials of His passion are yet, after eighteen hundred years, what He said they were, or rather what He says they are.

He said, "This is My Body, which is given for you; this is My Blood, which is shed for you;"—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son

of Man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you. As the living Father sent Me and I live by the Father, even so, he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

These words, my brethren, cannot pass away, any more than His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour," or His promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

I do then, in His name, and for your souls' sake, bid you lay these words of His to heart. Be sure that, in instituting Holy Communion, Christ has not ordained a thing that any man can dispense with. If His words will not pass away, how then shall you stand before Him if you have not prepared yourself in heart and soul to keep religiously and faithfully this His last command?

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Yea, Lord, Thy words respecting charity, Thy words respecting love, Thy words respecting forgiveness of injuries, Thy words respecting humility, Thy words respecting prayer, Thy words respecting the devout and faithful reception of Thy body and blood, Thy words respecting those who come to Thee, and those who abide in Thee, and those who keep Thy word shall never, never, pass away.

S E R M O N X I V .

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART.

ROMANS ix. 17.

“The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

I PURPOSE in this sermon to consider the dealings of God with Pharaoh, with whose history the lessons read out of the Book of Exodus, for this and the two next Sundays, are occupied. It is a very difficult history, because it sets before us one at least of the hardest problems connected with God's treatment of fallen man; but I do not think that it is on this account to be passed over, and for this reason, that however it may be ignored in sermons, it is not in the lessons. We read the account of Pharaoh in the lessons for three Sundays of the Christian year. We read in these chapters of God hardening Pharaoh's heart, and, in addition to this, the chapter from which my text is taken is read three times in a year, in the regular course of the evening service, viz.,

on the eleventh of January, on the tenth of May, and on the eighth of September.

Now the allusion to Pharaoh in this chapter, instead of explaining what appears at first sight unfair in God's dealings with him, actually reasserts it, and seems to imply that Pharaoh was just like a passive unconscious tool in God's hands. "For this cause have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."

You observe that it is here implied that God, to show forth His glory, made use of that very perverseness of Pharaoh which brought on him his punishment; and, more than this, even strengthened Pharaoh in his perverseness,—“hardened his heart,” the Scripture expression is—so that Pharaoh could not go back, but was forced by a sort of superior power to go forward to his destruction; that destruction being the overwhelming of his army in the Red Sea, by which, as I shall presently show, God's “name was declared throughout all the earth.”

I do not think that all things in this awful page of God's dealings can be explained. Difficulties will always attach to it. But though we cannot make all clear, much light can be thrown upon it, and, what is far more important, much instruction can be drawn from it, to work in us the true fear of God.

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Many of the difficulties of it will vanish if we compare God's dealings with Pharaoh with His treatment of hardened wilful sinners in all ages, as is seen in history, or in daily life, quite apart from what we read in the Bible.

Let us then, humbly imploring the assistance of God's Spirit, proceed to the sacred history. The Scripture account is so well known that I shall not dwell upon it. Pharaoh was holding the children of Israel in bondage, getting out of them all the labour that he could without recompense. God sent to Pharaoh repeated messages by the hand of Moses, to set His people at liberty. These messages were enforced by signs and wonders, which could only be brought about by One who had all nature at His absolute disposal, and which were no other than the ten plagues, by which the kingdom of Egypt was all but destroyed. Each successive miracle failed to answer the purpose: Pharaoh persisted in withholding his permission to let the children of Israel go; till at last, after the last plague, the destruction of the first-born, the people of Egypt rose up as one man, and thrust the Israelites out. Pharaoh, notwithstanding all this, again relapsed; he pursued after the Israelites, and perished miserably in the midst of the Red Sea, as we shall hear on Easter Sunday evening.

Throughout this account it is over and over

again stated that *God hardened Pharaoh's heart* so that he should not let the people go; and just before the pursuit of the Israelites, which ended in Pharaoh's destruction, this is reiterated, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord." (Exodus xiv. 4.)

In considering this subject, we must remember, in the first place, that not one syllable is said about the *eternal* destiny of Pharaoh and his host. Nowhere throughout the history have we the least hint given to us that Moses stood up, and preached the Gospel to Pharaoh. Nowhere are we told that he was called upon to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved, and not to trust in his own righteousness, but to manifest his faith by the work of giving up at once the unlawful gains he was wringing out of the flesh and blood of God's people. He had one message sent to him, and but one; "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." If he would not let them go he was to be smitten with this, that, or the other temporal plague or calamity. Who are we that we should add to God's word, and persist in treating the history as if judgment to come, heaven and hell, were proclaimed, when not a syllable is said about them? I believe, as I have often before mentioned, that untold harm

has been done to the right and profitable understanding of the Old Testament by supposing that all those who figure in its history had a knowledge of the Gospel similar to that which we have, and so will be judged on the same principles as we shall be. I see nothing whatsoever in the history to warrant the belief that God's message to Pharaoh implied more than it expressed, nothing whatever to enable us to conclude anything respecting his eternal state, nothing which can give us the slightest clue to the principles on which God will judge him and the rest of the heathen.

Now, I do not mean to say that Pharaoh is not lost—I say nothing about it; I leave judgment to God—but I do say that, if he is condemned at the bar of God, there is ample reason for believing that his condemnation is in no way caused by God's having hardened his heart, but by his own sin and was consummated long before Moses had anything to do with him.

Let us consider this. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. As such, it is impossible to suppose that he could have been unacquainted with the history of his own country for the two hundred years before his time. Now, if he had ever looked back into the annals of Egypt for this comparatively short period, what would it have taught him? Why this; that his own nation had been saved by one of the ancestors

of that very people which he was now grinding down. It is impossible to suppose that he, as king of Egypt, could have been unacquainted with the fact that, about two hundred years before his time, a famine had occurred, which involved in ruin all those parts of the world which adjoined his own country, and Egypt alone had been preserved by the extraordinary circumstances connected with the dream of the Pharaoh of that time, which had led to the exaltation of the poor prisoner who was raised by his (Pharaoh's) own ancestor to be prime minister of the land, and whose wisdom during his time of office, in laying up in store the surplus produce of the plenteous years, had saved the whole nation. *He*, at least, must have known all this: if he did not, it was because he was *willingly* ignorant of it, and wilful ignorance—that is, an ignorance which a man will not rectify because he feels that if he rectifies it and understands the rights of the case he will be injured in his own temporal concerns—such ignorance is, of course, very different from that in which a man is unavoidably involved, and from which he cannot by his own exertions extricate himself. When Pharaoh came to the throne, he must have asked how it was that the Egyptian monarch had such an enormous band of slaves at his disposal, to oppress and maltreat as he pleased. He must have learnt that these

Hebrews were his slaves because his predecessors had been guilty of the grossest ingratitude, and the most flagrant violation of all laws of hospitality, in enslaving those kinsmen of Joseph, the saviour of Egypt, whom the king himself had invited to take refuge amongst the then grateful Egyptians.

So, then, Pharaoh had hardened his own heart against all natural justice and all natural mercy long before God formally took him in hand.

But this is looking at these matters only on the human side as it were. Let us look at them now from a higher point of view. I believe most firmly that at the last day it will be found that God gives to every nation, as He does to each individual, its day of grace. The day of grace of the Egyptians was this sojourn of the family of Abraham amongst them. It was impossible that such men as Jacob and Joseph could have been in intimate intercourse with the King of Egypt and his court, without imparting to them some wholesome ideas respecting the nature of the one true God, and the vanity of idol worship. In what God did by Joseph in the matter of the dream and its interpretation, the Pharaoh of Joseph's time saw and acknowledged the hand of a God far above his own gods, for we read that he said to his servants, "Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom

the Spirit of God is?"—and he says to Joseph, "God hath shewed thee all this." (Genesis xli. 38, 39.) Here is the heathen king acknowledging the omniscience of the one true God; and this knowledge, we find, had also reached the steward of Joseph's house, who was evidently an Egyptian, for when the sons of Jacob told him of the money in the sack's mouth, he said to them, "Peace be to you: your God, and the God of your fathers, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money." (Genesis xliii. 23.) Here, then, is a gleam of a brighter and better sunshine resting upon the top of the pyramids. A good man, full of the knowledge of God, raised to the summit of Egyptian society, and, for a time, enlightening it with his own superior knowledge of the true God. This was Egypt's day of grace, just as we read that the sojourn of the same Israelites, nine hundred years after, in Babylon, was Babylon's day of grace. (Jeremiah li. 9.) Now, from the very position of Egypt, as holding the key of two continents, and having its coasts along two seas—the Red Sea, the high road to the far East; and the Mediterranean, the high road to the farthest West—and from the advanced state of civilization in Egypt, for it was looked up to by all Europe as the cradle of learning and the arts—from all this we see what a career of glorifying God was then opened to Egypt, if

it would consent to walk in the light which God was shedding upon it—this light, too, commended to the notice of the whole nation by the deliverance of which Joseph was the instrument. How, then, did the Egyptians use the opportunity with which God favoured them? Whilst they had the light, did they believe in the light lest darkness should come upon them by God's withdrawing it? No; they threw away their day of grace. They cruelly enslaved the family of their temporal and spiritual benefactor. In order to prevent their increase, the predecessor of Pharaoh murdered all the male offspring of Israel, and, in the reign of the Pharaoh of Moses' time, the oppression became intolerable. So heavy was the tyrant's hand upon them, that it is said, "They cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of their bondage."

From this you see that Pharaoh had thoroughly and effectually hardened his own heart—hardened it to the cry of the oppressed, to all sense of justice and mercy—long before God hardened his heart against the miracles which He caused Moses to work. Now came the day of retribution. It was in God's mind to punish the Egyptian king for his tyranny, and to punish at the same time the Egyptian people for their treatment of His people. It was also in His mind to punish both king and people for their neglect of their

day of grace, and to punish them, too, in such a way as might clearly show them that the God of these poor oppressed slaves Whom they had been rejecting was doing it all, and that He was the God of the whole earth.

In order to effect this, God, in the first place, sent the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, and by these Egypt was wasted and impoverished to such an extent that, after the plague of hail, the servants of Pharaoh entreated him to let the people go. "Knowest thou not yet," they said, "that Egypt is destroyed?" This was nothing but a just and righteous retribution upon this cruel and idolatrous nation for its treatment of the Israelites.

Then, to carry out His designs fully, God did not allow His severe judgments to have that effect upon Pharaoh which they were *naturally* calculated to produce. God supernaturally upheld him in his resistance to the evidence of the tremendous signs and wonders that He worked in his sight. This is the "HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART." I believe we cannot and must not attempt to explain away this phrase. As respects the way in which God acted on his mind so that he should bear up against the evidence of the miraculous plagues so calculated to terrify him into obedience, we can say nothing. It is one of the secret things of God. We may *safely* leave it to the great clearing up at the

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last day, when the God who gave His only-begotten Son to save sinners will show to assembled men and angels that He has dealt in far-seeing mercy with the very worst. The utmost that we can now say is, that God hardened against the force of certain terrors a heart that was already as hard as a millstone through its own cruelty and covetousness.

If we carefully bear in mind that God's hardening did not consist in making Pharaoh more cruel and obdurate than before, but in making him resist, or in upholding him to resist the effect of certain judgments, in order that he might undergo certain others which it was only just and right that he should suffer—if, I say, we carefully bear this in mind, we shall see a certain awful and severe, but still unimpeachable, justice in what God did; for it was God's design to execute condign punishment on Egypt for their treatment of His people and their neglect of His grace. If, then, Pharaoh had been terrified by the first or second plague into allowing the people of Israel to go, he and the Egyptians would not have suffered the punishment that was certainly due to them for a century of cruelty and ingratitude to the children of Israel. You must remember that the utmost that God did to Pharaoh by hardening his heart was to prevent him from being terrified into doing an act of bare justice, for as to supposing that any

miracles could have converted, or even altered for the better, such a heart as Pharaoh's that is altogether out of the question. You must remember, too, that the Egyptians, by the wasting and destruction of the plagues, got only just what they deserved. They had been enriched by the blood and sweat of the Israelites, and it was only meet and right that their ill-gotten national wealth should be taken away. And the way in which that ill-gotten wealth was wasted at the mere word of such men as Moses and Aaron, evidently showed to the Egyptians, if they had eyes to see, that in persecuting His people, they had offended against the God of the whole earth. The smiting of the first-born was a tremendous blow, but was it not paying this wicked king and nation in their own coin? Had they not some short time before destroyed all the male infants among the Israelites by casting them into the river? It was only just retribution, then, that this river, the instrument of their sin, should be turned into blood, and their own first-born destroyed.

I think that these considerations will serve to show that, taking this phrase as it stands, we can see enough to convince us that God did rightly and justly in thus dealing with Pharaoh. If people, however, will ask, "How did God do this?" we may borrow a very simple illustration from nature, which, though it does not explain the way in which God acted

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on his mind, still shows how the hardening may be the fault of the thing or person hardened, rather than of the hardener. The same fire that softens and melts the gold hardens the clay. Now, the very miracles that God performed in Pharaoh's sight were like fire to his cold worthless heart of clay. They hardened it, as the clay is hardened by the fire. These miracles would have produced a very different effect upon a man who had some true fear of God in him. They would have led such an one to seek God and submit to God, and so would have been the "beginning of wisdom" in him. But Pharaoh had no fear of God, no pity for God's people, so, humanly speaking, fifty more miracles would have had, no effect upon him for the better. •

Lastly, another consideration must be taken into account in forming an estimate of this deep matter. God wrought these signs and wonders in mercy towards the world; in justice toward the guilty and devoted nation of Egypt, but in mercy to the world; in order, as He says in my text, "that His name—i. e., His power and Godhead—might be declared throughout all the earth"—and these plagues, especially the last, were wrought in mercy even to the Egyptians; for if they had only discerned the hand of the one true God in the circumstances of the deliverance of the Israelites, they would have turned

from their idols to "serve the living and true God;" and this would have been the greatest mercy that could have overtaken them. You must remember that these signs and wonders—all of which led, step by step, to the thrusting out of the Israelites, and the passage of the Red Sea—were not done in a corner, but in the midst of the leading nation of the earth. Egypt was then the chief and central nation of the world. All Europe was in barbarism. We have accounts of the kings of Assyria, at even those early periods, communicating with the kings of Egypt. The whole world must have resounded with the accounts of the mighty works that God was then doing. And we are not left to conjecture on this matter. There is a remarkable incident recorded in the second chapter of Joshua, which shows what a stir the departure of the children of Israel must have made. Rahab, the harlot, entreats the favour of the spies who came to spy out Jericho with the words, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you: for we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you." Now this was said some forty years after the accomplishment of God's judgment upon Pharaoh and his hosts. So, if this woman appealed to them thus, so many years after they had

taken place, what a stir, then, must they have made at the time throughout all heathendom! So, in fact, this judgment upon Pharaoh was a double mercy to the whole heathen world. It taught them with an authority that would have come home to them, that the God of the whole earth was the God of Israel; it gave warning also to the wicked inhabitants of Canaan to repent and flee from the coming judgments.

All these things, taken together, serve to vindicate God's dealings with Pharaoh as expressed in Holy Scripture. They may not clear up all, but they serve to show how all would be cleared up if we had a perfect knowledge of the mode of God's working upon the mind and a perfect knowledge of human history. Let us not, then, be frightened with any difficulties that we find in the Bible. They are only to be expected in such a revelation as that book professes to be. It would be an argument against the truth of Scripture if everything in it was as clear and plain as our every-day transactions with one another; for the Bible is an account of the transactions of God with man—God, the Eternal God Who fills all things, Who upholds all things, and orders all things, and all of Whose works form parts of some vast design, some harmonious whole—this great God having to do with a creature limited in all his faculties—born one day, dying another—whose most perfect

knowledge only serves to show him how very imperfect his knowledge is.

Let us, then, submit, heart and soul, to this great God—the God revealed to us in the Bible. Let us freely confess that “His judgments *are* unsearchable, and His ways *are* past finding out,” as He has declared them to be.

Let us fear lest we fall, as Pharaoh did, into His hands—into the hands of One who has in His power heart and soul just as much as body; for if we go on hardening our hearts in unbelief and impenitency, He may take away from us, as He did from Pharaoh, the power of believing in His mercy, and of being altered by His judgments and chastisements. And let us remember that though judgment is His work, yet it is His strange work: and His delight is in mercy. If He *hardened* such a heart as Pharaoh's, let us be assured that, if we ask Him, He will *soften* OURS. He will, according to His express promise, take from us the heart of stone and give us the heart of flesh—He will open our hearts to the gospel of His Son, He will renew and sanctify them by His Spirit. This He has said He will do—this He has promised, so that if our hearts are hard we are without excuse—for His own Son is now at His right hand as our Mediator and Intercessor, for the very purpose of giving repentance—*i. e.*, a change of heart—to Israel, and remission of sins.

SERMON XV.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

ST. MATTHEW xxvi. 14.

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”

IT may, by God's blessing, solemnize our minds so as to enable us to realize more fully the indignities and sufferings that Jesus Christ endured, which will be brought before us in the sacred services of the ensuing week, if we consider the character and conduct of him through whose cursed covetousness our Lord was betrayed to suffer—Judas Iscariot, first the chosen apostle, then the son of perdition. Some of you, perhaps, have long looked upon Judas Iscariot as one who sinned in a way that it is well-nigh out of your power to imitate. You are familiar with the character of the holy and loving Saviour—you consider that the man must have been a very fiend incarnate who could betray to his enemies so good, holy, gracious, and withal confiding, a Friend. But wait a little. Have you ever considered what it was that made Judas so wicked

that he betrayed his Master, and was at last pronounced the "son of perdition"? I will tell you. It was the company of Jesus Christ—it was the society and fellowship of Christ and His apostles that made Judas so bad. "How!" you exclaim, "how could such a thing be? How could the company of the holy Jesus make a man worse? I am sure," you say to yourself, "if I could have heard but one word from Jesus, it must have converted me for ever. I never could have gone on in any course of sin if I had but once heard and seen Jesus." Ah, my brother, you do not know yourself, if you say this. I say that the same holy teaching and holy example which made St. Peter and St. John loving, self-denying saints, hardened Judas into the traitor. How could this be? Why, on the same principle that the fire melts one thing whilst it hardens another. The same fire that melts the wax hardens the clay—the same heat of the sun, and the same genial showers that cause the meadows to be green with sweet and wholesome tender grass, and the garden to bloom with the rose and the lily, make the thorn, the brier, the deadly poisonous plant in the hedge, or the weed on the dunghill, to grow more luxuriantly. St. Peter and St. John, because they were so long in the company of the blessed Jesus, became the greatest of saints, because they believed in, loved, and obeyed Him, and so they

improved opportunities more blessed than ever man enjoyed; and thus being full of Christ's gracious words, and the memory of His blessed deeds, they were fitted to be apostles of the Son of God. Judas Iscariot saw all or nearly all that they did, he heard all or nearly all that they did, but because he did not cleanse his heart—or, at least, suffer it to be cleansed—of his wretched covetousness—instead of growing holier and better through the works of Jesus which he saw, and the words of Jesus which he heard—he grew worse and worse. He actually grew gospel hardened under the preaching of Jesus Christ Himself. Warning after warning, reproof after reproof, that he must have at first felt to have been levelled against himself glanced off from his hardened heart, till at last he consummated his guilt by partaking of the Holy Communion with his innocent Lord and victim.

Let us look to his dreadful history. The first notice that we have of him is, that he was chosen to be an apostle. In order to realize this, you must remember that the Twelve Apostles were by no means *all* the followers of our Lord during the time of His ministry on earth. On the contrary, from what we can learn from the Gospel history there must have been many hundreds upon whom Christ's preaching had produced such an effect that they believed Him to be the Messiah.

We read, for instance, of His appearing between the time of His resurrection and ascension to five hundred brethren at once.

The apostles, then, were twelve persons chosen out of a much larger number of followers of our Lord. The account of their selection we read in St. Luke vi. 12: "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles; Simon, (whom He also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

We cannot but gather from this place that the prayers of Christ during this night were for guidance in the work of the next day, which work was the choosing of the Apostles. On what principles our Lord selected them we are not told; but from the fact that He knew what was in man, I think it cannot be doubted but that they all must have been sincere at the time when He chose them. We are not told whether they put themselves forward—whether they were candidates, as it were, for the office. We can scarcely think that it could have been so. They were, in all likelihood, the most promi-

ment of Christ's followers for zeal and attachment to His person. One of them, St. Matthew, and he not one of the foremost, had given up a very lucrative worldly position—that of a farmer of the revenue—to follow Christ.

I cannot think that our Lord could have chosen one, at the time He chose him, altogether a hypocrite, to go about to teach and to preach in His name; for the twelve had all the same commission—there was no difference, that we read of, put between Judas and the rest. He, no doubt, preached, worked miracles, and cast out devils, as the others did.

I believe that he really believed Jesus to be the promised Messiah. If he thought that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince rather than a spiritual Saviour, so did the other apostles. We know that St. Peter could not believe that his Master was destined to undergo the dishonourable death of crucifixion.

I believe that his feelings respecting our Lord's work and office were, like those of his brother apostles, of a very mixed character.

What, then, was the secret of his fall? Nothing else but his besetting sin, which he allowed to get the better of him, instead of struggling against, and overcoming it.

The deep and momentous, and yet most practical question now occurs, How was it that our Lord chose as an apostle one who had in

his heart a sin so deeply rooted that it finally destroyed his soul?

Why, my brethren, each one of the apostles had his besetting sin, the plague of his heart, which got him at times into trouble, and called down reproof upon him from his Divine Master. For instance, the two sons of Zebedee had the sin of ambition and desire of worldly distinction, which made them induce their mother to come to Jesus and ask of Him to put them over the heads of the others; St. Peter had the sin of self-confidence; St. Thomas, very probably, the heart-sin of mistrust.

The apostles in this respect represented mankind. What twelve men could our Lord have chosen—what one man could our Lord have chosen—who had not some heart-sin which, if yielded to instead of being resisted, would have landed him in perdition? We have all an evil nature, which shows itself by the fruits of evil practice, but in some in this way and in others in that. In St. Peter, this evil nature showed itself in self-confidence; in Judas, in covetousness—ripening into dishonesty and fraud, as opportunity presented itself. I think, then, there is a probability amounting almost to certainty that when he presented himself to our Lord amongst the disciples, and was chosen to be an apostle, he was no hypocrite, but like all the rest, a believer in Christ, without any very definite idea about what Christ was come

to do. He, no doubt, believed that He was a prophet sent by God, and attached himself to Him. But he was a covetous man; his heart was set upon having—holding—possessing. A man the current of whose thoughts was upon making and retaining money would, no doubt, know better than such simple-minded, guileless men as the rest of the apostles how to lay it out to the best advantage; consequently he soon had committed into his keeping by his brother-disciples the bag—the common purse of the Saviour and His twelve followers—for Christ and His apostles lived upon what was given to them by the bounty of others. Having this, we are told that he stole what was therein and applied it to his own private use, and perhaps that of his family; for, from the prophecy of him in the Psalms, we gather that he was probably a married man.

He was then chosen by Christ to be an apostle, which, even if he was then dishonest, still implies that he was more forward in putting himself under our Lord's notice than many others of His followers. He was also chosen, or at least allowed by them, to be the purse-bearer, and so they never could have suspected his want of honesty. Well, as the apostle St. John says, "he was a thief, and had the bag, and took what was therein."

Let us pause and consider what violence he must have done to his conscience by continuing

to be an habitual thief in the company of Jesus and the apostles. In the first place he had before him, from morning till night, in Jesus Christ, the example of everything that was generous, noble, high-minded, and disinterested. Only conceive a man growing in dishonesty with such an example before him! Then, in the next place, consider that every miracle that he saw was a fresh proof to him that Christ was a prophet sent from God. Then, in the next place, consider that our Lord was continually giving proofs, by what He said and did, that He could read men's thoughts. He gave a proof of this when He healed the woman who came behind Him to touch the hem of His garment. By that miracle our Lord plainly showed that He knew all that was going on about Him. How hardened, then, Judas must have been making his heart by pilfering from the common stock whilst he must have known that his good and gracious Master knew all about it, for He was evidently God's great prophet, the searcher of hearts! And then see, how one sin leads to another—how one evil habit requires more garments of iniquity to hide it! Covetousness made Judas a thief, and stealing made him an habitual deceiver and an hypocrite. So well did he play his part that none of the apostles suspected him. His Master, who alone knew the dreadful secret, did not

divulge it to the rest; and so far were they from thinking Judas worse than themselves, that when our Lord told them that one would betray Him, nobody even turned to Judas. They all were afraid of themselves—"Lord, is it I?" "Is it I?" Now to what arts must he have stooped to keep up his character; and in one case, at least, we know how he did so. He affected the *puritan*. He positively professed, did this impudently wicked man, on one occasion, at least, to be stricter than Jesus Christ. This was, as you remember, in the matter of the alabaster box of ointment. Mary, whose brother Lazarus had been raised from the dead by Christ, "took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

This was surely not too great a homage from one whose brother, at the call of Jesus, had come out of the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. Judas, however, thought of nothing but the waste. He thought expense was needlessly thrown away on the person of Christ. "This ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor." In blaming the woman, by implication of course he blamed Christ, for Christ had received the homage of Mary. He had accepted it as His due.

You observe how, in this matter, Judas professes to be more disinterested, more charitable, more strict than Christ. Christ accepts the costly offering; Judas would have it given to the poor. And you observe how he makes his puritanism the cloak of his sin. As the apostle goes on to say, "Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag." He murmured because he felt that he might have appropriated to himself the greater part of what the ointment would have fetched if sold. This reveals to us another depth of his iniquity.

Our blessed Saviour was not content with going about healing the bodies of the poor, but He was in the habit of giving alms in money to them out of the common fund that they had in the bag. And Judas, it appears, was not only the treasurer, but the dispenser of his Master's bounty, and had actually become so hardened and degraded that he robbed the poor of the very alms of Jesus Christ.

Of course, when one puts all these things together, the last act of wickedness, the betrayal of our Lord to His enemies, comes in almost as the natural sequel. When we consider how Judas must have withstood his conscience and hardened his heart, for perhaps two years, we scarcely wonder at the crowning villany.

But the questions now arise, Did he become thus wicked all at once? and what warnings had he from our Lord to stay him in his sinful course?

We cannot suppose that it was possible that he could fall at once to such a depth of guilt. One can imagine him committing his first act of dishonesty when he had been sent to buy something; he perhaps then secreted, or otherwise appropriated, some trifling sum—then, when he returned, our Lord, perhaps, in His very next discourse, spake earnestly of covetousness—or, “if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee,”—for we know that our Lord continually taught in one discourse the substance of what He had taught in another. Then the guilty man would quail and slink behind, lest his Master should fix His eye upon him; then he would repeat the offence, and be less abashed; then, peradventure, the Saviour would drop a word to show that His eye had followed him as he went about his dishonest work, and Judas would be ready to sink into the earth lest he should be exposed before his brethren: but he finds that Christ does not expose him, so he lays himself out to keep well with his fellow-servants, caring less and less for the good opinion of his Heavenly Master. He has to be very artful in all this, but he thoroughly succeeds, for no one suspects him.

And so he grows rapidly in dishonesty, insincerity, and hypocrisy.

But had he no warning from Christ all this time? Most assuredly. Two very distinct ones are recorded. The first was this:—Our Lord preached in the synagogue at Capernaum that deeply mysterious doctrine respecting feeding upon His flesh and blood. This strong enunciation of sacramental truth gave then, as it does now, very deep offence. The great body of the disciples were roused. "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Many of them then began to leave Him. They "went back, and walked no more with Him." But the twelve stood firm. Jesus turned to them—that is, to the twelve—and said, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter, answering for the rest, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God."

And now there is a word for Judas. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." I think that our Lord by this meant to say, "It is true that you have answered in the name of all the rest, and you believe that you are all sincere; for while others leave me offended at what I have said, you stand firm: but I know all your hearts. I have chosen you, but even amongst you, my chosen few, one has fallen—one of you is a devil. One is my

enemy, one has that in him which will make him sell me if he has the opportunity." Here was an opportunity for this wretched man to leave the company of the apostles. Many disciples were leaving because they could not accept what Christ said about eating His body. They incurred great guilt by so doing, but their guilt was as nothing compared to the guilt of him who still adhered to the apostolic body for vile dishonest purposes, and when he must have known that his Saviour knew all about him. The mistaken disciples who left our Lord's company left because of Christ's doctrine. Judas cared nothing for doctrine—all he cared for was to retain possession of the purse.

Another warning was given him. After our Lord had washed the apostles' feet, He said to them, "Ye are clean, but *not all*." And again: "I speak not of you *all*—I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Judas was now meditating his crime. Our Lord by these words assures him that He was reading his heart.

Immediately after this he received the sop—the sign that he was the man who was about to do the deed of darkness. He is then given up finally—Satan enters into him. He knew that the chief priests were then consulting

to take Jesus in the absence of the multitude ; he presents himself before them. "What will ye give me, and I will betray Him unto you?" Thirty pieces of silver are agreed upon,—the very sum prophesied that God should be sold for. But they ask, "How can you engage to find Him alone?" "Because I know a place where He goes to pray," answers the traitor. "He prays alone in secret, for hours together; perhaps, though, He may have one or two with Him, and it will be dark, and your servants will not know Him, so I will go up and give Him the accustomed salutation. Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; hold Him fast."

All his plans succeeded. He got the thirty pieces of silver, but with them not one satisfaction or enjoyment: remorse seized the wretched man when he found that our Lord was condemned. He went and hung himself, and, in the words of the apostle, he went "to his own place."

There is one obvious and very awful lesson for all of us—for you and me—in this dark history. It is the danger of walking in darkness whilst we have the light. Here is a man whose covetous heart tempts him first to a course of dishonest practices in the company of Christ Himself, and then leads him to the commission of the darkest act of villainy ever perpetrated. The vulgar, common-

place, every-day sin of purloining ends in the greatest crime that has been committed since Satan fell in heaven.

We see, by this history, how, as St. James says, "Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

And we see how means of grace, such as the preaching of the gospel and the divine prayers of the Church, make men worse if they continue sinning in the midst of them. What man ever had opportunities like Judas? and what man, if we except his brother apostles, was ever chosen to such a position? And according to his opportunities, according to the height of the place in God's kingdom to which he was chosen, so was his fall. Now this is ever the way in God's dealings. God chooses men to receive great grace. They need not fall from this grace. It is their own fault if they do. God does not intend them to fall—far be from us the blasphemy of any such supposition—and yet they do fall, because they do not make their calling and election sure. They fall by sin, by yielding to some temptation, some miserable thirty pieces of silver, some miserable gain by fraud, which really does not at all equal what they would get by honest industry. This hinders them from being religious, hinders them from coming to Christ, hinders them from preparing for Holy Commu-

nion, hinders them from reaching heaven. The steps that led Judas to commit the sin he did were the common vulgar sins of stealing and hypocrisy, and the root of them was covetousness.

He was continually, in thought, breaking the tenth commandment, and this led him to break first the eighth and then the sixth, and so he became the "son of perdition."

It may be I am addressing some in this congregation who are sinning in this very way. You are continually doing greater or less—perhaps, very trifling—acts of dishonesty, or, in some other way, you are continually doing violence to your conscience, and committing sins which you know well are slowly but surely destroying your soul.

What must you do? Why, you must do what Judas did not do. You must come to Christ to be saved *from your sin*. Judas was always in the company of Christ. He was always hearing invitations from Christ's own lips. And yet he did not come to Him for deliverance from sin—the very thing which Christ had come into the world to give.

If Judas, after his first fall, had taken his Master aside, and confessed his guilt, and asked forgiveness and absolution, and desired to be delivered from temptation—desired that the purse, the cause of his fall, might be committed to the keeping of some of the

others, as Matthew, who had shown his superiority to such temptations—then all would have been well. Christ would have accepted him, restored him, said to him, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.”

If, then, you are sinning as he did, and are afraid and ashamed of yourself, do what Judas did not do—come to Christ for deliverance from sin. Remember that all those bitter sufferings that we shall commemorate during this blessed week were undergone to save men from their sins, to save the drunkard from his drunkenness, the thief from his dishonesty, the covetous man from his grudging thoughts, the unclean man from his filthy thoughts, the swearer from his profaneness, the liar from his falsehood. Yes, the betrayal, the condemnation, the indignities, the taunts, the scourgings, the crucifixion, the death, which Jesus suffered were to save us—you and me—and all sinners who will come to Him, from the guilt, the pollution, the power, and the punishment of our sins.

SERMON XVI.

THE NEED OF ATONEMENT.

ROMANS V. 10, 11.

“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

THE ATONEMENT—what is the meaning of the word? To one unacquainted with its origin, it would seem at first to be derived from some other in one of the dead languages, from which so many of our scientific and theological terms are taken, and yet it is merely two of the simplest words in our mother tongue put together. It is the at—one—ment—the making those who were before separated in heart, to be *at one*—of one heart. When two persons before at variance are reconciled, the difference between them is made up; they are *at one* again, and the act of making them thus at one—the act of composing the difference—is reconciliation or *at-one-ment*.

The text asserts that, by our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received the *at-one-ment*; let

us see how this came to pass. If an atonement is required, two parties must be at variance; and so it was in the case of the great atonement. The two at variance were God and man. The thing that made them at variance was sin. The atonement was made by One who made such satisfaction for sin that God could be reconciled to the sinner, and yet show that He hated sin.

Let us consider these things. God and man were at variance. Now it is very difficult for us, for you and me, to realize this, for we both of us belong to the great family that is naturally at enmity with God. When the children of two families are nurtured in envy and hatred of one another, and when a member of one of these speaks bitter words against the other, he does not feel that he is doing anything very wrong, because he has been nurtured in malice against every member of the other household, and so his malice has become a part of his very nature. But though he and his brethren, that are all partakers of the same uncharitableness, do not see their conduct in its true light, yet their Christian neighbours do.

So it is with mankind. We are naturally alienated from the God who made us, we are all more or less involved in this guilt, and so we do not see it in its true light; but supposing that there are angels amongst

us—beings who have always loved God and never sinned—what must they think of disobedience to God? What must an angel think of a man at variance with his Maker? What must an angel think of a man who is continually putting all thoughts of his God and his Saviour out of his mind as disagreeable things which he need not realize till he is compelled to do so by death? Why, an angel must look upon such an one as we look upon a disobedient thankless child, or a faithless unloving wife, or an ungrateful friend. What must an angel think of an oath, and of him who swears it; of a foul word, or a lie?

What must an angel think of a man who knows that the church is God's house, and who never comes there, or, if he comes, never really worships? What must an angel think of a man who knows that Christ died for him, and yet never comes to His table, or comes, perhaps, but once a year?

This illustration will enable you to see clearly how very enormous may be the guilt of alienation from God, even though we may not be sensible of its enormity, because we all partially partake of this alienation. We are one of the parties at variance, and so cannot see our exceeding guilt in the matter.

Now, the Scriptures conclude all men to be thus by nature alienated from God. So conse-

quently, the most virtuous, the best educated, the most loving and amiable, persons cannot save themselves. They are, with their brethren, involved in one common condemnation.

The Scriptures assert this general condemnation of all in Adam in very plain terms. It is not often asserted nor is it much dwelt upon in the Bible, but still it is asserted so strongly, that there can be no room whatever for doubting that we are all brought in guilty before God. Now, I want particularly to draw your attention to the reason why in the Bible we are all said to belong to a sinful race and stock, and yet why the writers of the same holy book are not ever dwelling upon this sin of our nature. The sinfulness of the whole race by nature is asserted a few times very strongly in order to humble us all, so that no man may, on any account whatsoever, either assert his independence of God's grace or boast against his brother—so that every one of us, no matter what our advantages, may feel that we are one in sin, and so, one and all, need the one death of Jesus to atone for the sin in which we were born.

But when the prophets and apostles have a few times in terms which cannot be mistaken asserted the common condemnation of all, they leave it, and proceed to convince men of their need of repentance, not by harping upon the sin of men's common nature, but by asserting

and proving the iniquity of men's individual practice. The Holy God-inspired Scriptures, in bringing men to repentance, take exactly the opposite line to that adopted by the evangelical books and tracts of our day. The great bulk of popular religious books say much about our common sinfulness and next to nothing about individual men's sins. God, in Scripture, says very much about the *sins* of His people, and very little indeed about their abstract *sinfulness*—i. e., their sinfulness considered apart from their sin. Now, my brethren, I ask you to mark this. The great apostle of the Gentiles,—the great instructor of the Church in systematic doctrine,—the great asserter of the need of all men to be saved by Christ, and of the equality of all men in Christ,—how does this great apostle go to work in the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans, when he would bring Jews and Gentiles to repentance and the foot of the cross? Does he denounce the sin of our nature, and show that the best deeds of the heathen are nothing better in the sight of God than splendid sins,—that we are all polluted worms, and the like? No; sin and judgment, and God's wrath, were to the apostle not words, but realities. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he desired to bring men to repentance, and he knew that the very worst way of doing this would be to harp upon a natural unavoidable taint, so he at once goes to work

in a more sensible way. * He leaves for a while the taint, the disease, because men cannot possibly repent of a taint of evil which they have received when they were born in a state of perfect unconsciousness. They cannot repent of having been born, and so I say he passes over for a time this sinful nature that men cannot help, in order to consider the actual, evil, abominable sins that men can help — sins, that is, that are committed against light and knowledge, against the light of nature, and of the law, and of the Gospel; against the inward monitor, conscience; against the knowledge of God and of religion. What are the words of the apostle in describing the sinfulness of man? "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans iii. 10.) Then the apostle proceeds to show that all this was said not to the heathen, but *to the people of GOD—to those*

under the law, the Jews. This description is almost all taken from the Psalms of David, and it gives us a picture of the *general* state and aspect of society then existing amongst God's elect people. You must not, of course, suppose that David and St. Paul meant that every person about them had all these evil things in full perfection, and so was a monster of iniquity; neither are you to suppose that God had not then His hidden ones; for when these verses were written by David, both Samuel, the prophet, and Jonathan, the loving friend of David, were, in all probability, alive; and if Samuel was alive it could scarcely be said "there is none that seeketh after God." You are, then to take these words as fairly descriptive of the general state of things amongst God's people, the Jews, in David's time, and (by implication) of the unconverted Jews, and, of course, still more of the heathen of St. Paul's time,—and, in its measure, a description of the state of mere nominal Christians in our time.

Now let us look at some of these signs of an evil heart—these characters of evil men—and see how wrong they are, and how the people—the race—who have such a nature, which breaks out in such ways, need atonement. We cannot take all from lack of time; let us take two or three of them.

"There is none that seeketh after God." God, the Author and Giver of all good, offers

Himself to men, to be known by them, and men will not go out of their way—will not stir a foot to *seek* after Him—God, who made the worlds—God, who covered the earth with its verdure—God, who gave to the sun his light and heat, to the starry heavens their splendour, to the flowers their smell and colours, to the birds their song, to all the brute tribes of earth their various forms and instincts, to man his reasoning mind and his frame so fearfully and wonderfully made!—This great and good God offers Himself to man to be known of him—offers to man that he should share His happiness, and see Him as He is, and men—perhaps some of you—certainly the great mass of mankind—care nothing about all this, are as cool and unconcerned about all God's invitations as if the great God were nothing to them—as if they had rather not know God.

God's Own Son, full of all love and mercy, speaking words such as never man spake, doing deeds such as had never been seen in Israel, has to say in accents of almost despair to those over whom His heart yearned, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Surely, my brethren, there must be deep guilt in those who thus turn away from God! If we belong to God,—if we owe all to God,—if God takes the truest interest in us, if He be our Creator, our Saviour, our Judge,—then, surely, not to seek after Him, when He offers Himself

to be known by us, is no small crime in us His creatures.

“ Their throat is an open sepulchre.” You have often heard these words. Did you ever try to picture to yourselves what is meant by them? They mean that the conversation, the familiar words, the common talk, of men alienated from God is like the noisome pestilential vapour that proceeds from the putrid corpses in an open tomb. And it is so. Even in a Christian country it is so. When sinners get together their conversation betrays the pollution of their minds. They love to speak corrupt defiling words that poison the ears and the souls into which they are poured—poison them and pollute them just as certainly as the putrid air from the tomb spreads sickness and plague in bodies that breathe it, and often kills them. Many a soul has been destroyed by bad corrupting language. Take care, for God’s sake, what language you use, or you may murder souls that Christ died to save.

“ With their tongue they have used deceit.” That is, they have put the best member of their bodies to the vilest uses. Speech was given us that we might lead one another right, and by it we lead—knowingly and wilfully lead—one another wrong. It was given us in order that, by it, we might make known our thoughts to one another, and we use it to conceal our thoughts from one another. In

men's use of their tongues for deceitful purposes, they cast aside the character of God, which is truth, and copy the character of God's enemy, "for he is a liar, and the father of it."

"The poison of asps is under their lips." If you hurt them, even though unintentionally, or cross them, or are in their way, they turn round and sting you in your reputation. They do not stick at any uncharitable bitter insinuation. If you have done good, they try to show that you had some selfish motive in it; if you have done wrong, they make the very worst of it. They always put the most uncharitable construction upon your conduct. Yes, the slanderers, the detractors, the malicious defamers, are the venomous reptiles of society. Take heed that none of you Christians be at all like such things.

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Evil men, when they are offended, scruple not to invoke upon the bodies or the souls or the limbs of their neighbours, or fellow-creatures, the very heaviest curse that the wrath of God can inflict. Of course, every one that uses such imprecations shows his utter want of God's fear, hardens his heart against the sense of the reality of God's future retribution, and, as surely as the third commandment is part of God's law, will be visited, here or hereafter, with God's heavy displeasure.

“Their feet are swift to shed blood.” In the countries where the Bible was written, and in a very large part of the world besides, the foulest of crimes is by no means uncommon. In very many countries—in all heathen countries and in some professedly Christian ones—men have little or no scruples about taking a fellow-creature’s life for very trifling provocations—for gain—for revenge of some slight insult—often simply to get him out of the way. Within a comparatively short period, in a large part of the British Islands, if a man took a piece of ground that another had been dispossessed of, most likely because he would not pay rent for it, the man who took the land was certain to be shot at, and the murderer would be well known to the whole parish, and not a soul would stir one step to bring the shedder of blood to justice. Now, think of the guilt of thus hurrying a soul into eternity—hurrying him without a moment’s preparation into the presence of his Maker, for such a thing as this. And this was the respect shown for God’s gift of life, not in some remote uncivilized corner of the world, but in a large part of this kingdom, and within the memory of every man of middle age amongst us.

“Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.” It has been said, that a state of war (*i.e.*, a state in which men are doing all they can to destroy

their fellow-creatures' lives, and plunder their property,) is the natural state of man. When one looks at the past history of the world, this seems no exaggeration; for history is mainly a record of wars, of rapine, of violence, of intrigues, of the destruction of human life on the largest possible scale.

Such is the apostle's picture of human depravity. Now, again, I beg you to observe—indeed, those of you who think at all cannot but have observed—that the apostle here is not attempting to cast down pretensions to fancied virtue. He is not attempting to show the hollowness of the virtue of some moral but unspiritual or unenlightened people; he is showing the iniquity of sin; how it degrades the whole race; how it makes men like pestilential sepulchres, like reptiles; how it makes them, as a race, unmindful of God who made them; how it makes them, as a race, delight in destruction; how it makes them take after God's enemy rather than God. Here, then, is an Epistle, which, more than any other part of Scripture, treats of sin and grace, condemnation and justification, and yet here we have no image of fancied virtue pulled to pieces; we have, on the contrary, sin shown to be sinful. Goodness is not shown to be hollow, but sin to be hideous. God's people are brought in guilty, not because they are moral, but because they are immoral. The apostle, in pre-

paring the way for the atonement, proves, not the deficiency of virtue, but the iniquity, the cruelty, the deceit, the pollution of vice.

And it is needful for us too, now and then, to draw such a picture, and ask you to look at it.

It is profitable that you should at times consider the extent, the power, the venom, of sin, that you may see what a work God had to do to procure atonement for it—that you may see what love God must have had to the world, to send His only-begotten Son amongst such people and into such a place as we had made this world by our sins.

My brethren, we should sometimes look at the yawning gulf between earth and heaven that we may see what a bridge had to be built to reunite them. We must look now and then at the variance between man and his Maker—we must see how wholly the race was alienated from God, how wholly unlike God man had become, how opposed we had become to all that God delighted in, if we would realize our text. “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Now, when you thus look at sin—the sin of human society, the sin of the world, the sin of the Jews, the people of God, and the Gentiles, the people who knew not God,—when you

look at the picture thus drawn by the apostle—drawn faithfully, and not too darkly coloured either, as all history bears witness—you will see how utterly impossible it was for God to be reconciled to such a race without some satisfaction—something in the great Divine empire answering to satisfaction to offended justice in a human government. In the nature of things it could not be that God could pass over such a state—no, not even on repentance—of which repentance, be it ever remembered, mankind, as a race, has never shown a sign. Speaking after the manner of men, it was not a case for mere mercy.

The Holy Trinity must have regard to the myriads of spiritual beings, good and bad, that knew the state of things—that were spectators of it all. And so, in order that we might not be lost, in order that the devil, our seducer, might not triumph in the success of his artifice, God determined to make a way Himself for His mercy to reach us. That Person of the ever-blessed Trinity who gave the law, gave Himself as a ransom for offences done against that law. In a way which may be partially hidden from us, but not the less in a real true way, “HE BARE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY.” The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, He gave Himself a ransom for all. He was the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole

world; that is, He really and truly, by His sufferings, atoned for all the murders, all the adulteries, all the thefts, all the false witness, all the lies, the slanders, the evil speaking—He atoned for all the sinful outbreaks of sinful passions, all the forgetfulness of God, all the idolatry, of the race.

He endured on the cross what was considered by the just God a ground for His extending mercy to every sinner. Such, at least, is the case if the Scripture terms, applied to His sufferings and their results, are to bear the same meaning as they do elsewhere.

He did all this,—He was able to do it,—because He was in one person God and man. When God brought about the redemption of the world, it was by the incarnation and death of His only-begotten Son. His only-begotten Son, one with Himself in justice and holiness, took upon Him man's nature. The Son of God became the Son of man. Without ceasing to be God He became man; and the dignity of the Eternal Godhead gave such inconceivable worth and honour to the manhood which He had taken into the unity of His own person, that the shedding of His blood became a world's ransom. God's Eternal Son submitted to death for us—He drank the cup of wrath for us—for every man—the cup of wrath drugged with all the sin, all the idolatry, all the profaneness, all the blasphemy,

all the disobedience to parents, all the murders and murderous thoughts, all the adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, all the dishonesty, the covetousness, the alienation of the world from God. This cup, poisoned enough to destroy a universe, He drank,—this weight of sin, enough to sink the greatest archangel, He bare,—and after drinking such a cup, after bearing such a weight, He rose again to show to you, and to me, that the poison of this cup had been healed by His holy lips, and the weight of our sins had been borne away. My brethren, are any of you gross sinners?—have your mouths been like these open sepulchres, your tongues like these reptiles' tongues that the apostle alludes to? The Son of God has made atonement, satisfaction, reconciliation for *your* sin. You need not live in sin here and perish hereafter. It will be your own fault if you do. If you feel your sin and desire to be delivered from it, if you come to God through Christ, embrace His promises, and use the means He has appointed, you shall be delivered from it. "Being free from sin, and become servants to God, you shall have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." And you, even you, "shall joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement."

SERMON XVII.

GOD'S COUNSEL IN CHRIST'S DEATH.

AcTS iv. 27, 28.

“Of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

IN the fourfold narrative of the bitter sufferings and death of our Saviour Jesus Christ, two things must strike every reader—one is, that in the whole account there is not one single direct appeal to the feelings. Each of the four evangelists gives a bare record, and nothing more, of Christ having suffered such and such things. There is not one exclamation of indignation against the perpetrators of such crimes, not one word of sympathy with the sufferer, nor one word of shame at the miserable part the disciples played.

The other thing that must strike every reader is, that at every step the evangelists tell us that such and such things took place *because God had foreordained them*, or, what is the same thing, “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” In the words of my text, Herod,

Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the Jews, in all the cruelties and indignities they inflicted on our Saviour, were only doing "whatsoever God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done." And not only do the evangelists tell us so, but our Lord Himself is careful to direct our attention to this truth, that in what He suffered at the hands of weak or wicked men, He suffered *all according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*

When, for instance, He gives the first intimation of the treachery of one of them, He appeals to the prophecies that went before Him—"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." (John xiii. 18.)

Then, when the wretched traitor, goaded with remorse and despair, flung at the feet of the chief priests the pieces of money with which they purchased the potter's field, we are told: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." (Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.)

Then, when our Lord foretells that they

will all be offended in Him, it is as a fulfilling of Scripture. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." (Mark xiv. 27.)

Then, when He bids Peter sheath his sword, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?*— (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.)

Then, when He was crucified between two thieves, it was that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "He was numbered with the transgressors." (Mark xv. 28.) When they parted His garments into four portions, and cast lots who should have the coat woven without a seam, it was that a verse in the twenty-second Psalm might have its accomplishment. When they brake the legs of the thieves, but brake not His legs, it was that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, "A bone of Him shall not be broken." (John xix. 36.) When they pierced His side, it was that another Scripture might be fulfilled, "They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced." (John xix. 37.)

But perhaps the most marvellous of all these instances is one recorded by St. John—it is marvellous, because it seems to say that the Saviour, in the hour of His extreme agony,

of set purpose uttered a complaint, in order to bring about the accomplishment of the only prophecy that was yet to be fulfilled before He should give up the ghost. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." (John xix. 28—30.)

Now how are we to account for the fact that what we should have most surely expected in this narrative of our Saviour's sufferings, we do not find? Not one word is inserted into the account to enlist our sympathies with the Sufferer beyond the simple narration of what He endured—not one word to move us to be afflicted with the afflictions with which He was afflicted. We know that the death by which He atoned for sin was beyond expression painful. If it had been the aim of God's Spirit to excite our feelings, nothing would have been easier than for Him Who inspired His servant Jeremiah to write such a book as the Lamentations, or Who inspired His servant Moses to compose so deeply touching a narrative as that of the reconciliation of Joseph with his brethren—nothing, I say, would have been

easier than for Him who knows all the avenues to the heart to have given to us a story of the Passion that would have melted every heart, and dimmed every eye with tears of sympathy, but, so far from this, not one appeal is made to our feelings. One evangelist simply says "He was crucified"—another, "There they crucified Him." The account in St. Matthew is, "And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots."

But, perhaps, it may be thought, that though God inspired the four evangelists to give us such a narrative, yet He meant that after-teachers and pastors should so enlarge upon and apply it as to excite our human sympathies for the sufferings of the Saviour. We know, for instance, that the devotional writers of one branch of the Church have, in the books which they have written for this sacred season, done their utmost to harrow up the feelings by descriptions of all the conceivable circumstances of our Lord's agony. We give them credit for having in this attempted to fix the gaze of the sinner on his Saviour, and to draw his heart towards Him. But it is not what either inspired evangelists or apostles have done; on the contrary, it is what they, to all appearance, have most studiously avoided.

Look at the apostolical epistles,—see how full they are of reference to the sufferings of Christ, and yet in no one case do they dwell upon or particularize the horrid circumstances of agony and pain—rather do they set forth the design of God in bringing these sufferings to pass, the love of Christ in submitting to them, the infinite results affected by them, the example afforded by them, the necessity of conformity to them, and the danger of neglecting them.

St. Paul speaks continually of the blood of Christ; but it is not that we should weep because it was shed, or mourn for the stripes and wounds through which it flowed from His adorable person, but that we should know and rejoice in the truth that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, so that being now saved from wrath through Him, we should joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement.

And so the same blessed apostle alludes to it, by way of example, in the epistle for last Sunday—He who was in the form of God took upon Him the form, and died the death, of a slave; and the lesson from this is not that we should weep tears of sympathy, but that “this mind should be in us which was also in Christ Jesus.” And so it is with the Apostle St. Peter; he exhorts his converts as “a witness

of the sufferings of Christ." And how does he allude to sufferings the weight of which his own conduct, at one time at least, must have sensibly augmented? Exactly as his brother Paul does, as a propitiation to be trusted in, and an example to be followed—"Hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: . . . who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter ii. 21, 24.)

My brethren, why is it that the evangelists and apostles should so studiously avoid dwelling on the sufferings of Him to whom we owe our soul's salvation? It is because they address themselves not to our feelings, but to our faith—they would have us not weep, but believe; not weep, but obey; not weep, but submit—and it is for this reason that, at every step in the sacred narrative, they show that what our Saviour suffered was foreordained of God.

I do not say that they who really and truly feel their sins and the love of Christ in suffering in their stead will not weep, even for what He suffered on their account, but I say that the Scripture account is not written primarily with the view of exciting tears of sympathetic sorrow, but with a view of exciting faith,

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It may be well here to show that God's having foretold that our Lord's death should be accompanied with such and such circumstances of cruelty does not by any means imply that God foreordained—and so made necessary—the malice which prompted all this exhibition of cruelty in the enemies of our Lord. I must do so on this account: It is quite evident that the evangelists could not have laid such stress upon everything being done in order to the fulfilment of Scripture unless there were some deep moral reason why we should contemplate the whole transaction, in all its circumstances, as foreknown; and the nature of our minds is such, that we instinctively shrink from the idea that God in any way foreordained the evil which we see that He both permits and makes to work out His gracious purposes. One consideration will, I think, be some help to us in steadily contemplating the crucifixion and its attendant horrors as foreordained, though of course it will by no means clear up the clouds and darkness that will for ever overhang the deep mystery of God's working out His purposes by overruling the actions both of good and evil men.

Did we ever seriously consider what it was that brought our Lord to the cross? Various

causes may be assigned for it, according as we look at the various agents in the transaction. If we look at Judas, it was his covetousness and treachery; if we look at the chief priests, it was their malice and envy; if we look at Pilate, it was his cowardice; if we look for deeper and higher causes connected with the unseen and eternal state of things which so marvellously meets the visible and temporal just at this point in the world's history, then we may say that it was owing to God's love for sinners, it was owing to the malice of Satan, it was owing to our sins, which made such an atonement needful.

All these are true reasons, but there still remains one connected with the character of our Saviour Himself, and that is His perfect virtue, His unspotted holiness.

It was this that called forth the dread of Satan and the malice of His enemies. The true light came into the world, the light of God's holiness and truth, and men loved darkness rather than light: they could not bear that which by comparison made their sin look so exceedingly sinful, and so they strove to put out the light.

This opposition and hatred of unholy men to such a perfectly good and holy man as our Saviour, was what we could have ourselves foreseen. It was no more than what a heathen moralist foresaw who lived long before the coming of Christ, when he said that, "If the

gods should decree that virtue herself should ever become incarnate and live on earth, men, instead of obeying and loving her, would most certainly hate and crucify her." He uses this very word "crucify," and this because crucifixion was the most cruel death that he knew of; and so, to mark his sense of the antagonism between vice and virtue, and the malice of the former, he pronounces what almost seems a prophecy, though it was really only a strong way of expressing what he knew to be a truth of human nature, that the higher the virtue and holiness, the more hatred and opposition it will call forth, just as the warmer the sun's rays the ranker the vegetation that will spring up in certain soils under its influence. Now what this heathen moralist, what we ourselves, could foresee would take place under *some* circumstances if holiness itself should ever live upon earth, Almighty God foresaw under the exact circumstances under which it would and must take place at the time when His only-begotten Son did actually become incarnate and dwell among sinful men.

We could without difficulty have foreseen that if God were about to send His Son into a world at enmity with Him, the presence of such a holy being would certainly stir up all the wrath and malice of the prince of the world and his children. *God*

would not only foresee this as we do, but knowing beforehand the character and the circumstances of those amongst whom His Son's lot would be cast, He would foresee the exact outward form that their inward enmity would assume on all occasions. This He would foreknow, because He perfectly foreknows all events, all contingencies; knowing all that would happen, He would foresee all the shapes that the malice of men would assume from its first dawning to its consummation.

Why, then, you will ask, should He send His Son into the world when He foresaw the evil that the presence of such holiness would call forth? It was to save the world. It was, that when the presence of the All-Holy Jesus should have called forth the utmost virulence of evil in its most aggravated form round the cross, that very evil, by spending itself upon Him when on the cross, should, in the counsels of God, work its own remedy. We can now in some sort distinguish between what God *foreknew*, what He *foreordained*, and what He *foretold*.

He *foreknew* the malice and envy that His Son's holiness and power would call forth in evil men; He *foreknew* all the circumstances under which their malice would wreak itself upon the sufferer. He *foreordained* that when this envy and malice did spend itself on Jesus, it should work out His purposes of grace to the

world in effecting an atonement for its sins; and in order that we might be assured of this, He *foretold* all the circumstances—the betrayal, the desertion, the piercing of the hands and feet, the drawing lots, the numbering with transgressors, the shame, the mocking, the scourging, the thirst, the vinegar, the gall. All this He foretold for us, that we reading and hearing such things might believe—might believe that, as all these circumstances came to pass just as He had foretold that they should, so the atonement which they wrought was according to the eternal counsel of His goodness and wisdom for our salvation.

In the words of His Own Son, He hath told us all before it came to pass, that when it is come to pass we might believe. By “believing” we obtain the benefits for which He died; not by mere acquiescing,—for all do this, but by active, realizing, energizing belief. Mere acquiescence in such a case seems an insult. If we believe in such grace—the grace of God shown under such circumstances as we have read in the Gospel for each day of the week, by such a Person, God’s only-begotten Son—for such an end, the salvation of our souls from sin here, and its consequences hereafter—if we *believe*, surely our belief must be living and loving faith.

Making every allowance for the frailty of our nature, and for the tendency which

external things have to dim our spiritual sight, our belief must be tending to produce in us its two natural effects — peace of conscience and loving obedience. If it is not, it cannot be worthy of the name of belief; it must be that thankless acquiescence for which Scripture has not even a name. And what do angels think, and what shall we think in eternity, of a mere thankless fruitless acquiescence in what God the Father, the Ruler of the universe, foreordained, and what God the Son foreknew He should suffer throughout all the course of His pilgrimage on earth, and what God the Holy Ghost foretold in its minutest particulars by His servants the prophets?

No, for God's sake, and for His Son's sake who died for us, let us not be content—let us not rest till we know that the sufferings of His Son are producing in us the effect He designs.

By the sufferings of His Son God designed that you and I should have peace with God through His blood, should have our consciences cleansed, should love God because He so loved us, should crucify our sinful flesh, should be crucified to the world, should live to Him who died for us, should be happy in affliction, should bear patiently the contradiction of our fellow-sinners, should follow the example of His patience.

For these ends have we been baptized into His death, and for these ends are we invited to partake of His body and blood. That this may be the blessed effects of His passion in each one of us, may He, of His infinite mercy, grant, who once hung upon the cross for us, and is now at the right hand of God interceding for us, and on whom we shall all look in joy or in despair at the last day.

SERMON XVIII.

THE GOSPEL.

ROMANS i. 1—4.

“The gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

MY brethren, why is Easter Sunday the greatest day of the year? Before I answer this question for you, I shall ask another. Why do we keep Sunday at all? In the times before Christ Sunday was not the Sabbath. Sunday is not the last, but the first day of the week. God said, “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day,” and “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” And we believe that we in spirit fulfil His command by keeping holy the *first* day. Why this change of the day? and why exalt this Easter-day over all other days? Because on this day a greater thing took place than the resting of God after the work of creation. Redemption is greater than creation, and so we commemorate the finishing of the work of re-

demption rather than the finishing of the work of creation ; and so it is that we Christians keep the day of the *week* on which redemption was completed as the “day of God,” and the day of the *year* on which redemption was completed as the “day of days” in the Christian year.

Now, in so doing, are we acting according to the spirit of the New Testament? Assuredly we are; for if there is one fact put above another in the New Testament, it is the resurrection of Christ as following close upon His death. The whole Gospel and everything connected with it is bound up in Christ's resurrection. I will give one or two proofs of this, to which I earnestly direct your attention. We have in the Acts of the holy Apostles, two sermons by the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. One of these sermons, or part of it, has just been read for the second lesson this evening—*i.e.*, St. Peter's to the assembled multitude at Jerusalem, who were looking with astonishment and awe at the signs of divine power in the apostles when the Pentecostal shower of the Spirit had just descended upon them—the other, St. Paul's sermon to the people at Antioch, in Pisidia, will, D.V., be read for the Epistle on Easter Tuesday. These two sermons are the exact counterpart of each other. They go over the same ground of doctrine and are on one

thing—viz., the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its consequences. St. Peter says in his sermon, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews by wicked hands had crucified and slain, had yet been raised up by God, who had loosed the pains of death, (or rather the bonds in which death held Him.) Then the Apostle goes on to speak of David as alluding, in the sixteenth Psalm, not to himself but to Christ, when he utters prophecies, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” “He seeing this before,” the apostle proceeds, “spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” My brethren, this is the first Christian sermon that ever was preached; it was the very first sermon, in point of time, that ever fell from the lips of man which set forth Christ as a redeemer from sin and the grave, and invited men to repent and be baptized into Christ’s Church. It was blessed by the Holy Ghost more than any sermon has ever been since, for three thousand persons were by it made, not only Christians, but good and faithful ones; and it is almost all upon the resurrection. It sets forth Christ crucified, and passes on to Christ risen from the dead.

Turn we now to St. Paul’s sermon. It winds

up in these words: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and saw corruption. But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts xiii. 32—38.) You see from this that the glad tidings of the ancient promise and the forgiveness of sins are all made to depend upon Christ's resurrection; and this, remember, is the only sermon of St. Paul's which remains to us.

When we turn to the Epistles of St. Paul, we find the same place given to the resurrection of the Saviour. In the beginning of the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, we have the apostle declaring his gospel. Now, what was St. Paul's gospel? These are his words: "Moreover, brethren,

I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." I will not now multiply proofs of the fact of the resurrection or its evidence being considered by the apostolic writers as THE GOSPEL;* but proceed to consider how all the promises of God, which we call the Gospel, are identified with this one fact of Christ's rising again from the dead on the third day.

You must remember, in the first place, that though no man who ever lived was so humble and lowly as Jesus of Nazareth, none who ever lived upon earth claimed to be so great as He did. He said of Himself that He and God the Father were one; He said of Himself, "Before Abraham was I am;" He said that "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself;" He said that all men were to honour Him as they honoured the Father. Such are the things that He said of Himself, and yet

* For further Scripture proofs, the reader is referred to the note at the end of this sermon.

He who said them was like all His fellow-men—not different in outward appearance, nor in stature: there was nothing about Him which so overawed men into subjection that as soon as they saw Him they yielded submission to Him. Some did, but they were few compared with the multitudes that rejected Him and cried out at last, “Crucify Him!”

But He also claimed to be the great Prophet so long expected—the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets spake. When His follower Simon Peter said to Him “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” He for so saying pronounced a blessing upon him—“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.”

Besides all this, He said that He came not only to teach men but to save them, and that they were to be saved by believing in Him. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Besides this, He said that God His Father had sent Him into the world, that the world through Him might have life. And still further, He said most wonderful things respecting His very flesh. He said that His flesh was “meat indeed;” He said that He would “give His flesh for the life of the world;” and He said, “Whoso eateth

My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." And above all, He foretold that a day was coming in which He would have the whole human race before Him at the bar of His judgment-seat, that "all they that were in the graves should hear His voice, and should come forth."

Think of a poor humble-looking man—apparently about thirty years old, living in an obscure town, the reputed child of poor parents, His face marked with sorrow and care—saying such things.

What did He do? what sign did He give that we should believe Him? He did many miracles, but so did the prophets before Him,—so did Elijah, so did Elisha, so did Moses, so did Samuel,—and yet none of these men said of themselves what Christ said of Himself. They were none of them so meek and lowly as Christ, and yet none of them said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life"—"I am the Bread of Life"—"I and the Father are one." What sign, then, did He give or promise?

My brethren, Jesus Christ staked the truth of His mission, of His Christship, of all that He claimed to be, of all that He said, on *one thing*,—on the great Easter-day sign—on His resurrection. When He cleansed the temple, and by so doing claimed to be the Lord of the temple, and was asked what sign He gave, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I

will raise it up. But He spake of the temple of His body." (John ii. 19, 21.) As if He had said, "My body is the true and living temple of God; destroy it, and in three days I shall rise again in My body, and so show that God dwells in My body, in a far greater way than He dwells in this temple." Again He said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Again, He compared His death and resurrection to a corn of wheat falling into the ground and there dying, and yet producing from its very death another living plant, with a multitude of grains of corn in the ear—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) As long as He was alive He was, as it were, alone—very few effectually believed in Him, and very few were effectually united to Him—but if He died His blessed body would be the seed from which should spring up a mighty harvest of immortal bodies and sanctified souls. I will not multiply instances. You see from these how that Christ staked the truth of all that He claimed to be, and promised to do, on His own resurrection from the dead.

And on the morning of this the first day of the week, He did rise from the dead. He had been put to death in the sight of a scoffing and gazing multitude. His very enemies when they came to examine His body, finding that He was dead, brake not His legs as they did those of the two thieves that were crucified with Him. His side had been pierced by the Roman soldier's spear, and a watch had been set over the sealed tomb to make all secure, in order that His body might not be stolen away. But all was in vain. On the world's great Easter morning they who came to look for what remained of Him were greeted with the question, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here: He is risen." The soul of the Son of man had returned from the unseen place into which it had descended; it had returned to the sepulchre hewn in the rock. There it found the body such as no body of man was ever found before after so many hours of death. It found the body untouched by corruption. It reanimated again the undefiled undecaying flesh of that Second Man on whom the curse had no power; and during forty days was the Saviour upon earth, appearing first to one, then to another, then to ten apostles, then to the eleven, then to a great multitude on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

My brethren, we shall now be able to see

how His resurrection is the assurance that He really was all that He claimed to be. We shall best see this, if we consider first how His resurrection shows us that He was the Son of God. My text declares that "Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, was declared to be the Son of God with power, by His resurrection from the dead." Now, God is clearly the one only Being who has power over death. When the soul departs from the body it returns to the God who gave it, and is in His safe keeping, either in His paradise or in His prison, and none can pluck it out of His hands and restore it to its earthly tenement. And when the body dies, it immediately begins to corrupt, to turn again to its earth, dust to dust.

When, then, our Lord declared that He was the only-begotten Son of the Maker and Ruler of all things, and that in proof of this He would rise from the dead, it is quite clear that He made the strongest possible appeal to the Unseen God. If there is a God, and if He cares about truth and falsehood, He would never have raised again, as He did, a man who had asserted that He was His only-begotten Son when He was not. When Christ said, "I am God's only Son, the Saviour of the world, and because of this I shall rise from the dead after suffering the most shameful of deaths,"—and He was continually saying this in effect—He

left the matter, as it were, with God. He put it to the Great Lord of life and death to vindicate His own honour. If He were not God's only Son, then the Lord of all would vindicate His outraged honour by allowing the event to prove His prophecy false; His body would corrupt and decay like other bodies, and when the women came to the sepulchre, they would have found His body. He would have lived the life of a deceiver, and died the death due to Him for saying that He was God's Son when He was not.

But if He *was*, really was, and *is*, God's only Son, then the Lord of life and death would assuredly vindicate His honour by bringing about the truth of His own Son's words, because in that case His own honour would be bound up with His Son's honour. If He had sent His Son into the world to save the world and to reconcile it to Himself, and if that Son of His had staked the truth of His being sent by God, on His rising from the dead on the third day, then, in that case, God would be bound to verify His own Son's words. He would be bound to make good the sign that was agreed upon between Them to assure mankind that in accepting Christ they were not accepting a deceiver, but the true and only Son of the Eternal Father, able to do all that He had undertaken to do—*i. e.*, able to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."

So, then, if the resurrection of Christ is true, all that He said respecting His being the only-begotten Son of God is true also, for God would never have given such a testimony to one who said that He was His Son when He really was not.

Now, if His resurrection is the powerful declaration that Jesus Christ is God's only-begotten Son, it is also the powerful assurance that He is our full and complete Saviour in every way that He has undertaken to be. If He has been raised from the dead in token that He is the Son of God, then, my brethren, He has atoned for all sin by His sufferings, then He has reconciled the world to Himself and to His Father, for He died not for Himself or for any sin that He had done, since He was a lamb without blemish and without spot, but He died for the sin of the people—His people, His Church, all mankind. If, as the Son of God, He died for all sin, and if, as the Son of God, He was raised again, then He has done by His death what He undertook to do. He undertook by His death to make a ransom for souls, to reconcile men to God; and if He is raised from the dead, then His death must have reconciled men to God, and made a ransom for their souls, or death would yet hold possession of Him. Now you see how it is that, by Christ's resurrection, we have confidence in preaching to you forgiveness of sins, as

St. Paul had in that sermon of his to which I have alluded.* What you want as sinners is forgiveness, and assured peace from the knowledge and belief that your sins are forgiven. We preach to you, then, the Resurrection—we preach to you, that is, that God's own Son took upon Him your flesh in order to bear our sins,—that on the cross He did actually bear the iniquity of your sins,—that God raised Him from the dead after bearing your sins, thereby assuring you that full satisfaction has been made for your sins, no matter what they have been. Now, God is reconciled to you, but you have to be reconciled to God. God is not at enmity with you, but you, if you have in your hearts sin unrepented of, and unforgiven, are at enmity with God. You must lay aside this your enmity to God, by turning to Him through His dear Son pleading His blood for your pardon and cleansing, and then He will apply to you individually through the ways of His own appointing, when and how He sees best, that blood which was shed for all; then, being reconciled to Him through the blood of the cross, and having nothing in your heart opposed to His ruling there, you will feel at peace with Him. You

* “He whom God raised again saw no corruption. Be it known unto you THEREFORE, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”—Acts xiii. 37, 38.

will realize, as perhaps you never have done before, the words of the apostle, "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, YEA, RATHER, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God:" and those words of another apostle, "God, who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God."

And so it is respecting every other word of Christ, every other promise of Christ, every thing that He said He is, or that He would do in time or in eternity. If the resurrection is true, all His words are true. Did He say that He was the "bread of life," "the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man should eat thereof and not die?" that "His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed," and that the bread which He brake was His body, and the wine that He gave to his disciples to drink was His blood? then all this is true, true in the best way, in the highest way, in the most real way, in the most efficacious way, though we may not know exactly what that way is or how it is brought about. You may depend upon it, then, if Christ is risen, that no matter what men say or think, there is the greatest possible difference between those who come to the Lord's table, and there with a true and lively faith do what He bids them, and those who do not come. Now I do not mean to say that all those who come, whether they have

faith or not, are right and in the right way, and truly partake of Christ, but I do mean to say, that if Christ rose from the dead, then all His words will be fulfilled, none will fall to the ground, and so His words respecting Holy Communion will not fall to the ground. If He said that the bread is His body, then, in some real, true, and effectual and heavenly way, it is His body. If He said that the cup is the new covenant in His blood, then they who in faith partake of it are there and then partakers of the new covenant in His blood. If He said that He is the bread of heaven, then they who do not come to feed upon Him cannot hope to eat the bread of Heaven. It is useless disputing about this. What is it to us if some Papists think of the Holy Communion wrongfully and superstitiously? Because transubstantiation is not true, or in accordance with Christ's words, is the Holy Communion only a sermon? Can Christ's words respecting eating His flesh merely mean that we should mentally dwell upon His atonement? Why should we, to avoid carnality and superstition, so interpret His blessed words as if when He said, "This *is*," He really meant "This is *not* My body?" Must the lowest and least mysterious meaning of the words of the Eternal Son just before His Passion be necessarily the safest and the nearest to the truth?

My dear brethren, these are Easter Sunday questions, for on this day our Lord was raised

up in that body which He said was to be the life of the world, and by this day's resurrection He gave the most solemn declaration that all His words are true, and amongst them, of course, His words respecting His body at His last Passover. Let us especially beware of treating His words respecting the Eucharist, or His flesh being the true bread, as if they were exaggerated and startling enunciations of the plain truth—that we must realize His atoning sacrifice.

By instituting such a feast on the very night of His betrayal, and calling the things of which He asks us to partake by the awful names of His "Body" and "Blood," the Eternal Son of God must have ordained something very great in itself, and very beneficial to us, if we prepare ourselves with faith and prayer. If, then, we do not come to it at all, we lose the benefit, which must be unspeakably great—if Christ as on this day rose again from the dead.

And so with every word of Christ, none will pass away if He rose from the dead.

If He rose from the dead, then those upon whom He pronounced a blessing are blessed,—the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungerers and thirsters after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers,—these are blessed because He has said so, and He is now at the right hand of God for the very purpose of seeing that all things come to pass according to His word.

Nothing can reverse His blessing. The world may pronounce the high-spirited—those who have what is ludicrously called a proper pride—to be in the right, but what is all the world to us if Christ is now at the right hand of God—at least, what will it be to us after death? What will it be to us at the last day? Take any maxim of the irreligious world, any decision of the religious world, any opinion of our friends, neighbours, and acquaintances—*i. e.*, our world—what is it worth if Christ has risen from the dead and if He thinks differently? For, if Christ has risen from the dead, then He will judge the world. He will have us all before Him—not one will escape—not one will evade His judgment.

If, then, Christ has risen from the dead, are we preparing to stand before Him? Are we taking refuge under His cross and bearing His cross? Are our hearts renewed by His grace, and our footsteps guided by His word? If we believe in Christ's resurrection—if we know what we say when we confess that the "third day He rose again from the dead," this is our one business.

If Jesus Christ has not risen, then we may live as *we* like; if Jesus Christ has risen, then we must live as *He* likes. For if He died and rose again, then we are His; for the Scripture says, "To this end Christ both died and rose again, and revived, that He might be

the Lord of the dead and the living," and if Christ, as on this blessed day, rose again, then our Redeemer liveth—then, according to His word, He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and in our flesh we shall see God.

The following passages are additional instances of the way in which the sacred writers identify *the Gospel* with Christ's resurrection:—

"Now it was not written for His sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed, *if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."—Rom. iv. 23—25.

"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, *yea rather, that is risen again*, who is even," &c.—Rom. viii. 34.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—Rom. x. 9.

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel."—2 Tim. ii. 8.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, &c. . . . God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 Peter i. 3, 4, 21.

When an apostle is to be chosen into the place of the traitor, it is that he may be a "*witness of the resurrection*."—Acts i. 22; and in accordance with this the apostles are described as witnessing to this one thing, as if it included or implied every other truth of God. See Acts iv. 83, "With great power gave the apostles *witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*." Compare with this Acts ii. 82; iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 29—23; x. 89, 92; xxvi. 22, 28.

If we are to receive the obvious teaching of the above texts, then an *objective truth*—an *historical fact*—AN ARTICLE OF THE CREED—is THE GOSPEL.

SERMON XIX.

BALAAM.

NUMBERS xxiv. 17.

“I shall see Him, but not now : I shall behold Him, but not nigh : there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”

THE character of Balaam is one of those that can hardly be understood by the careless reader of Holy Scripture, for it requires us to put together many scattered passages to see his sin in its true light. If we were to confine ourselves to those chapters of the Old Testament, read for our Sunday lessons about this time, in which direct mention is made of him, we should be at a loss to understand why in the New Testament he is held up to us as a covetous reprobate. And yet, assuredly, such he was. He was the Judas Iscariot of the Old Testament, endeavouring, with his eyes open, to make merchandise of souls whom he knew to be dear to God.

Let us briefly consider his history, for by so doing we shall see the wickedness of his sin.

Balaam was an inspired prophet of God. As such he knew the truth respecting God,

and goodness, and righteousness. He also knew how God would save the world by One who should arise from among the children of Israel. But Balaam had a heart-sin—the common every-day sin of covetousness. This made him accept the reward of divination offered to him by Balak, which induced him to set out on a long journey to curse a nation whom he knew to be the peculiar people of God. When Balaam found that he could not curse them, because God turned His curse into a blessing, he became their tempter. He said to Balak, “I cannot curse this people. No enchantment will avail against them, for God constrains me to speak words of blessing against my will. But I will tell you in what way you can injure them. The God who brought them out of Egypt is a holy God; He loves them because He has chosen them to be His people; but He loves goodness and holiness more. If you can tempt them to commit sin, you have then some chance of overcoming them; for then God will be turned to be their enemy.”

Balak took this wicked man's advice, and the chapter read for the first lesson this evening shows the way in which Balaam's devilish suggestion was carried out—devilish, I say—for to strive with our eyes open to tempt our brethren to commit sin, for the very purpose of depriving them of God's favour, is knowingly.

and deliberately to follow the example of the first tempter—the devil.

The Moabites, in alliance with the Midianites, called the people of Israel, who in their journeying were now in their immediate neighbourhood, “unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods.” It appears also that in these idolatrous rites scandalous wickedness of another sort took place. All this led to a great slaughter of the Israelites who sinned, by the hands of their brethren. God, however, did not allow this wicked design, though successful at first, to prosper. An expedition was ordered against the Midianites, and they were almost exterminated—and Balaam, the son of Beor, the reprobate prophet, who, by his crafty wiles, was at the bottom of all this mischief, was slain in their company.

This is the brief outline of the circumstances of Balaam’s history as they bear upon the enormity of his sin. I shall now proceed to dwell upon the particular light with which Balaam was favoured, and how he miserably failed to walk in it; and as I go on I shall hold him up as a warning to ourselves as Christians.

First, we gather that he had a knowledge, far beyond that of his age and country, of the requirements of God’s law, and of a future

state of retribution, and of the necessity of strict obedience to God, so that a man should say and do just what God wishes, and neither more nor less.

He had, consequently, a very high degree of what we call moral light.

The first proof of this that I shall give will be from a saying of his that is preserved in the book of the prophet Micah. It appears that the Israelites had fallen into the too common temptation of placing external observances in the place of internal religion, and the prophet Micah, to convince them of their sin in this fundamental matter, reminded them of a circumstance, recorded, most probably, in some book of the prophets or of sacred history that God has not seen fit to incorporate into the Bible. This was a conversation between Balak and Balaam. The words of the prophet Micah are, "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal;"—(that is, whilst they were journeying between these two places)—"that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." Balak asks of Balaam, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of

rivers of oil? shall I give [as the heathen were wont to do] my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" This is what Balak, the heathen king, asks of Balaam, the prophet of the true God. Balak was in great fear for himself and his nation. He had heard what God had done for the Israelites when He brought them out of Egypt. The camp of Israel was now in its onward march far too close to his possessions to allow him to remain at ease, and so he very naturally consults Balaam respecting the God of these Israelites. Will the same idolatrous and cruel rites as the Canaanites use in the worship of their gods avail to call down His favour? No. Balaam answers, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" If thou doest this, and that natural conscience which is in thee sheweth thee this, He will give thee more light. He will show thee more of His ways.

You observe, by this, how Balaam knew the superiority of internal personal religion above the mere observance of external rites, and yet all this time he was consulting with Balak for the overthrow of those whom he knew to be God's chosen and peculiar people.

Here was a man preaching internal righteousness and goodness as consisting in LOVING

MERCY and WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD, as contrasted with mere ceremonial observance—and yet all this time he was in the very gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

From this we learn that a man may know what spiritual religion is—how its external manifestations, at least, are a right life, a loving heart, and a humble walk—how he may preach down forms and sacraments, and affect to exalt pure spiritual worship, and yet all this while his own heart may be utterly wrong.

Beware, then, of supposing that you must be led by the Spirit of God because you take what you call, or what the world calls, a spiritual view of God's service.

But we must pass on to another point in which Balaam showed a light and knowledge far beyond his time. He evidently believed that God was a righteous judge, and that He would reward after death a man who had loved and served Him here. His are the memorable words, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." He here manifestly regards death in the light in which it is set before us in the collect for Easter Eve, as the "gate of a joyful resurrection." He evidently looks upon the death of the righteous as blessed, because God is then taking him to Himself, and sealing him as His for ever. Here, then, was a man praying that he might die the death of

the righteous, and yet going about to seek for enchantments—ordering altars to be built and bullocks and rams offered upon them, and all to see if God would not allow him to utter curses against His people, that so he might clutch Balak's rewards of divination. Here you have a man asking to die the death of a saint whilst, if he had given but one look into his own heart, he must have been conscious that he was all the while selling his soul for the gains of covetousness. Now, you will say, what incredible inconsistency is here ! How could the man so deceive himself ? Wait a little ; some of us may be deceiving ourselves in the same way.

For in the first place, how do our lives answer to our prayers ? Are we, for instance, putting up holy prayers and yet giving way on every small provocation to unholy tempers ? Do our endeavours at all answer to our prayers ? If we are praying against sin, are we also striving against sin ?

Then, too, what are our prayers ? Balaam's prayer was that he might die the death of the righteous. We do not read that he prayed that he might live the life of the righteous ; only that he might die his death and be received at last into the same heaven with him.

But, my brethren, the death of the righteous is the termination of a righteous life. For

a man to pray that he may die the death, and enjoy the heaven of the righteous, whilst he is not diligently preparing for it, is really as absurd and inconsistent as for a man to pray or wish that he may win a race without running it, or that he may conquer in a battle without fighting it, or that he may reap a harvest without sowing it.

What then, I ask again, are your prayers? Is your prayer that you may be accepted at last or accepted now? Do you pray that you may be saved at the last day, or saved now? Do you pray that God may take you to heaven when you die, or cleanse, and sanctify you now whilst you are alive? Remember that, as far as we can gather from the Bible, those who will eventually be saved are saved *now*. Salvation is not so much a future as a present thing. Heaven is not a place into which any person, no matter what he is or has done, can be at once transferred, without repentance, without love, without holiness. We have no reason to believe that the mere taking to heaven would work in us love or holiness.

So we must look to our prayers—to their whole drift, and intent, and meaning. It sounds very well to pray such a prayer as this of Balaam. It may be well for us sometimes to use it, but we must see to it that we pray for something else besides, and desire something else besides. Our wish must not be only

to be received by God at last, but to glorify God now. So the prayer of Christ teaches us by all its petitions, for throughout that prayer we ask for the present hallowing of God's name—the present doing of His will. Yes, we must not only pray for heaven and its rewards, but for repentance, for faith, for increase of faith, for clean hearts, and right spirits, for the love of Christ, for strength to do God's will, for affections set on things above.

If we pray for these things, and seek these things earnestly, then, and then only, can we be right in asking for final acceptance, and a happy and peaceful Christian death, and a glorious eternity.

Again, we see in Balaam the example of a man who had what is commonly called his better moments. There were times when he made professions of obedience with some degree of apparent earnestness and sincerity. When he first met Balak, he says to him, "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." Again, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth."

Here is a man using as godly and as submissive language as can well be conceived, and saying it, too, to one who had great power, —to a king who could reward him if he pleased him, and perhaps give him great trouble if

he displeased him. But what is it worth, this sudden gleam of godliness? It is like the meteor in the dark night. It suddenly flashes and lights up all its quarter of the heavens, and is as suddenly extinguished, and the darkness that closes in upon it seems to come back the blacker by the contrast.

And, my brethren, is it not now so amongst Christians? Are there not those who give fair words, and make a show, and perhaps not altogether an hypocritical one, of Christian obedience at some point? They even make what is called "a stand for God." But it is like a transient gleam of sunshine on the deep. It sparkles for a short time on the surface, but the depths of the inmost heart are as cold and unmoved and dark as ever. We do not know till we strictly examine ourselves how we all of us are double,—how we are two men at the same time,—how there is the old man and the new within each of us, and how we must see to it by searching self-examination, as to which has real possession—real possession of the sanctuary of our hearts—whether the core of our hearts belongs to God or to the world, and to self. Such things we learn from this dreadful history of one who could speak words of godliness and submission, and deliberately advise deeds of wickedness.

But we must pass on to consider another degree of light which Balaam had. God not

only deals with men as individuals, but He gathers His people together into a Church; and so all through the Bible we find religion brought before us under a twofold aspect; not only as being a matter between God and each individual man, but also as being a matter between God and a collection or body of men, whom He has gathered together, and made His Church, and His people. When we come together in these walls to worship God, we come together as the Church of God. The stones and arches of this building are not the Church, but we, the living stones, the souls and bodies, of men, and women, and children, baptized into Christ and believing on Him, are *the* Church here: and so we worship God with, as it were, one mind and one mouth. And all the various scattered congregations cleaving to the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship with the apostolic ministry, and meeting together for prayer and eucharist, are one body; and God treats this whole body of men and women believing in Him and His Son throughout the world as if it were one person. He calls it the bride, the wife of His Son. He encourages it as if it were one person. He reproves it, and even, if necessary, chastises and punishes it as if it were one person.

Now God has always had a Church or body of men to serve Him, and in the time of Balaam His Church was His people of

Israel, whom He was leading through the wilderness, and whom Balak was hiring Balaam to curse. And Balaam knew that this people of Israel were the one only people or Church of God then existing upon earth. And he describes in the most glowing and exalted language how God loved this people of Israel, and how His council should stand sure respecting them, and how no weapon formed against them should prosper, and how they should ultimately triumph over all opposition. These are His words respecting Israel: "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Here you see is God's unchangeable love to His Church. Then he goes on, "Behold, I have received a commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it." And again, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." Here he asserts God's protecting care over them, as shown in turning the very curses of their enemies into blessings.

Again, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." In these words we have Balaam asserting that remarkable principle of God's dealings with His Church, whereby He looks

at it not as in itself, all defiled and perverse, but as acceptable to Him in His Son. Nothing could have been more perverse than the conduct of that generation of His people ; but God did not extinguish His loving kindness to the nation and Church because of the sins of that particular generation, but He rather looked on them as all included in their great forefather Abraham, who had pleased Him so much that He called him His friend, and He looked above all to the great seed of Abraham who should one day be born of one of their families ; and looking at them as thus included in Abraham their forefather, or rather, in Christ their future mediator, He passed over their iniquity, and bare with their perverseness ; and this is what is meant by Balaam's words, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel."

Then too, Balaam recognised the peculiar mystical presence of God in His Church, when he said, "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." Again, see how Balaam's heart kindles as he looks upon the tents of Israel covering the valley before him—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."

You see from all this how Balaam was enlightened as to the present grace and future prospects of the people and Church of God.

And yet he opposed the Church of God here, for he tempted the people of God, and died in the camp of their bitter enemies ; and three apostles advert to him as a reprobate, who, as far' as man can judge, has no part with God's Church in the world to come. And may it not be so with some amongst us? The true idea of the Church, as the body of Christ, has been in these latter days revived amongst ourselves. Never has there been before, in our branch of the Church, at least, such an appreciation of the beauty and devotion of her services—the grace of her Sacraments. Never before have we known so much, and read so much, of her past history, of God's dealings with her, and of the saints that He has raised up to contend for the truth within her,—or to extend her borders. But so much the more reason is there for asking, Is this knowledge a beautiful dream to any of us, as it was to Balaam? His imagination was fired with the prospect of the glories of God's Church and people, whilst his heart cherished the darling sin which for ever cut him off from their fellowship. Oh, my brethren, what the Church, and its ministers, and its ordinances, and its fellowship, yea, and even its Sacraments, are to us for salvation or for destruction depends

upon what we are in ourselves to God and to Christ.

They cannot of themselves make us right with God if we are in heart wrong with Him. They are, as of old, a savour of life unto life, to some, and, it is to be feared, a savour of death unto death to others.

But, in the last place, we must consider that Balaam was a prophet of Christ. By far the most distinct prophecy in the whole Pentateuch of the future triumph of our Lord is that which was read in the first lesson for this morning—"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy (or rather make spoil of) all the children of Sheth."*

The latter part of this prophecy may seem a little obscure, as we are wont to associate our Lord's coming with His errand of mercy only; but let us remember that He is continually represented as coming for judgment, as well as for mercy. In the one hundred and tenth Psalm, it is not only said that His "people shall be willing in the day of His power," and that He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec," but also that "He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies,

* Or it may mean, "destroy all the sons of tumult."

and smite in sunder the heads over diverse countries," which is, I take it, a similar prophecy to this part of Balaam's.

Here, then, is one who spake long beforehand of our Lord as the Star of Jacob, as the Sceptre out of Israel, as the Smiter of His people's enemies, and the Spoiler of the great ones of the earth. And he said this not as a mere mouthpiece of another, but as if he felt what he was saying, and that he himself personally should be witness of His triumph. The words of Balaam, "I shall see Him, but not now," remind us of those of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. . . . In my flesh shall I see God."

We have here a man who could speak well of Christ—very well—better apparently than any other man of his time, and yet he did not belong to Christ.

And so we but too often find that to know about Christ's person and work, and even to descant about the fulness of His salvation, is no infallible sign that a man belongs to Him.

Nowhere do I read in the New Testament that to speak well of Christ's person and work and to express personal interest in Him, is any sign whatsoever of being right with Him.

There is no Church that St. Paul blames so much as the Corinthian Church, and yet respecting the Corinthian Church he gives

thanks to God that they are "enriched by Him in all knowledge, and in all utterance."

This is a very fearful subject, but it is a very salutary one. The minister of Christ must ever and anon take it up and tell men that they may know what true religion is, and not be religious; that they may know what the Church is, and yet not eventually belong to her; and that they may even know about Christ and what Christ has done, and from former experiences of His grace speak feelingly of Him and of His work, and yet notwithstanding all this be His enemies.

Oh, my brethren, let us see to it that we not only know about Christ, but that we **KNOW** Him—know Him by that personal effectual knowledge of which St. Paul speaks when he speaks about "Knowing Him and the power of His resurrection." (Phil. iii. 10.)

"Knowing Him;" having converse—communion with Him, by and in His Spirit—we giving to Him our hearts, our praises, our prayers, our desires; He letting us know, by His secret unspeakable presence, that He recognises us and accepts us.

"And the power of His resurrection;" that is, through the power of His risen life we live, we overcome sin, we cast covetousness and every other idol out of our hearts, we partake of His flesh and blood, and so we dwell in Him and He in us.

SERMON XX.

THE DESIRE OF GOD UNFULFILLED.

DEUTERONOMY v. 28, 29.

“And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!”

THE account of what called forth these words of Almighty God you heard but a short time ago, as the chapter from which my text is taken was read for the first lesson. Suffer me to remind you of it.

The Israelites shortly after their departure out of Egypt came to the foot of Mount Sinai, and from the top of this mountain God gave to them His moral law, contained in the ten commandments. The circumstances attendant upon this giving of the law were very terrible. They are thus described by the sacred writer: “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people

out of the camp to meet with God ; and they stood at the nether part of the mount." The scene, as described by those who have been there, is one of profoundest desolation—a narrow plain shut in on all sides by lofty crags, worthy, from its barrenness, its rugged peaks, and the glare of its scorching sun, to be the cradle of the ministration of condemnation.

God Himself descended to the top of the burning mount, and gave out from it His ten commandments. The voice of God was so piercing and so terrible that flesh and blood could not endure it, so the people of Israel as one man came to Moses, and prayed him to be a mediator, as it were, between them and God. "Behold," they said, "the Lord our God hath shewed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and He liveth. Now, therefore, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it."

God accepted this prayer of the Israelites, and He sent them back into their tents, and retained Moses near Him as a mediator, according to their prayer. "As for thou, stand thou here by Me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them." The words of approval by which God showed His acceptance of the prayer of the Israelites are the words of my text.

Let us, relying on God's help, see what lessons they teach us. First of all, they teach us that terror, or the emotions that arise from it, may exist, and yet there may be no circumcised, no renewed, no changed heart in those who are for the time terrified into some show of reverence and godly fear. The words of God forebode, as it were, (if it be right to apply such a term to His words,)—the words of God, I say, forebode that this fear of God was not deep, and would not be lasting. There was some good or serious impression made so far as to bring forth the fruit of good words, and apparently also honest resolutions. Less than this can scarcely be gathered from the express words of God. "I have heard the words of the voice of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken."

But what became of these men who showed this apparently reverential fear? Why, as

you know well, one after another perished by rebellion against God, before they came to the banks of Jordan. There was not the "heart in them to fear God, and keep all His commandments alway." Their fear was like "the morning cloud, and the early dew that passeth away." They heard the voice of the Lord God, and saw the great sight of the mountain burning with fire, and yet this voice—though the voice of God Himself—and the sight of this fire, though it was the very glory that shrouded the Godhead from them—the sign and token of His immediate presence—did not change their hearts. This shows us that no sensible pomp and splendour, no signs of God's presence, however overwhelming, will change the heart of man—permanently and effectually change it. You have, perhaps, a godless, irreligious heart, and this heart enables you to enjoy this world, and to go on without much fear of the world to come, but still you hope that God may take you at last to heaven. You think of heaven, you form your ideas of it from certain visions in the Book of the Revelations, you think of a throne in the midst of it, and One sitting upon the throne, and you try to picture to yourself something of the unearthly splendours with which it is surrounded. You think of the four living creatures with their unceasing chant, "Holy,

holy, holy ;” you think of the rainbow round about the throne, and the thunderings, lightnings, and voices that proceed from it, and the faithful all collected before it, and ranks upon ranks of angels on all sides. You think of all this, and you say within yourself, “ However wrong in heart I may be now, one glimpse of all this would make me right—right for ever.” Ah! you are miserably mistaken. God once came down upon a mountain, and manifested that He was there by the fire, the lightning, the clouds, the thick darkness, and the voice as of many waters. God came down in the sight of men, and they heard His voice, and that voice told them their plain easy duty. But scarcely had He withdrawn the signs of His presence, scarcely had the sounds of His awful voice ceased to vibrate, when the very people for whose sake He had thus manifested Himself, forgot Him, changed His glory into “ the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.” You have read how the worship of the golden calf followed close upon the fire and the smoke of Sinai, and the Voice which had preached “ Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image . . . for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”

My brethren, the evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, is always the same. You may be quite sure, that if the

appalling signs of God's very presence, and the awful sound of His voice, did not change the hearts of the Israelites in the plains of Sinai, they would not permanently change your hearts if God was to transfer you in your sins to His presence in heaven. Remember that there was rebellion once in heaven; and if God was to allow impenitent, unholy, unloving sinners, to be there, there would be rebellion again there. No, my brethren, if you would be partakers of God's eternal kingdom of peace and goodness, you must have hearts renewed by His power and purified by faith in this your day of grace, or you, and such as you, would fill heaven itself with strife and misery.

Then notice another thing, which is that there may be great signs of the heart being deeply impressed with divine things, and yet there may be no real, because no abiding change. A man may be frightened at the prospect of his speedy removal from this world to the presence of his Judge by disease or some other cause which makes death inevitable, or almost inevitable, and under this conviction he may show signs of what is called a death-bed repentance, and ministers and friends may think that all is right with God, so well does he say all that he speaks; and yet all may be wrong. I will tell you a fact which makes this not a matter of conjecture, no

mere groundless assertion, but a terrible and mournful certainty. Some years ago, I remember reading in a thoroughly trustworthy publication the account of the experience, in the matter of death-bed repentances, of an eminent minister of our Church. He was the clergyman of a very populous town parish, and had consequently every opportunity of watching such repentances on a large scale. He mentioned that he had attended some one hundred and fifty cases of sick persons brought to the verge of the grave, but afterwards restored to health, all of whom with death staring them in the face made earnest protestations of sorrow for past sin and earnest resolutions of amendment, and I believe many, very many of them professed to have peace through the blood of the cross. Now of these one hundred and fifty, how many do you think paid to God the vows that they had made with their lips, and I dare say sincerely as they thought, when they were in trouble? Why, some three or four. I believe it was just three. One in fifty of these death-bed professors of repentance had a persevering heart—had the heart in him when he was not in immediate prospect of rendering his account, to turn from that sin of which he had professed his abhorrence when he thought that he was on the point of having to stand before his Judge.

What a lesson to teach us that men may

well say all that they speak when they think that God and His judgment are close at hand, and yet have not the heart in them which God looks for and desires !

What a lesson, my brethren, for us, that now, whilst we are in health and strength, we should repent and turn to God ; and take incessantly on our lips the prayer of the Psalmist : “ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

But we now come to another very dreadful, and yet salutary lesson, that we gather from this text, which is, that God may earnestly desire, and take every means to bring about, the repentance of those who both live and die in impenitence. You learn from my text that God desired to see a changed and a right heart in these His people of Israel, and He did not see it ; and notwithstanding His love to them as a people, He was at last obliged to let His justice and severity run their course, and His people were cut off in the wilderness. The words of my text are as plain as possible on this point. Words cannot express more distinctly that God wished to see a certain character in His people, and that He was, if we may say so, disappointed of His wish. Now this,—that God should earnestly desire that men should be changed in heart, and yet that His express desire should be thwarted—is a thing so awful and so mysterious,

that we must carefully examine whether it be so or not; we must see whether the teaching of this passage is borne out by that of other passages of God's word.

Now, we find five or six other most distinct places of Scripture in which God is said to yearn, as it were, to show mercy upon those who yet will not receive His mercy.

One we find in this same book of Deuteronomy, (chap. xxxii. 28, 29.) "*They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*" A second instance we have in the eighty-first Psalm, (11—13,) "*But My people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would not obey me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations. Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways.*" Here you observe how God earnestly desired the obedience of His people, in order that, instead of correcting them, He might have continued to them that loving-kindness in which He delights. Again, Isaiah xlviii. 18, "*O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*" By this place you see how God longed that the people of Israel had only obeyed His rea-

sonable laws, because He knew the deep overflowing peace that would have been theirs if they had done so. Again, you remember the parable in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, of God and His vineyard—how God compares His ancient Church to a vineyard planted on a fruitful hill, with no pains and expense spared upon it to make it productive, and God anxiously looks for fruit from it, and is disappointed. “He looked,” He says, “that His vineyard should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.” He looked for the fruits of righteousness from His people, upon whose culture He had bestowed such pains, and He only received bitter fruits—fruits that He hated—fruits of sin.

But we have two far more striking instances to give. Remember, my brethren, how Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God—remember, I beseech you, how He wept, in bitterness of soul, over Jerusalem, and how He said, “If thou hadst known,”—which is, in the Hebrew idiom and way of speaking, exactly as if He said, “Oh, that thou hadst known,”—“even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” (Luke xix. 42.) And again, see how the blessed Jesus reveals the intensity of disappointment and of grief over lost souls in those other touching words, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.)

All these Scriptures say one and the same thing—rather, God in all these Scriptures says one thing—and that is, that He desires—He earnestly desires the salvation of those who yet are not saved—that He takes pains to get fruit from those who continue barren—that He would gather men to Himself, to the very arms of His mercy, and yet they are not, and will not, be gathered.

I do not think that, if we rightly apprehend it, there can be anything more appalling to us than the fact that sin in beings such as we are should actually overcome God's mercy. Certainly nothing can be more mysterious, for here is the Almighty God allowing men to oppose Him, to thwart to a certain extent His blessed will on their own behalf, to reject (to use the words of inspiration) the counsel of God against themselves. Now, my brethren, if we are to gather the needful lesson from these places, which all say the same thing, we must face this question: Could not God if He had chosen, in one moment have had His will? God said respecting the Israelites, "Oh, that there were such an heart in them!" Could not

He, in one moment, have changed every heart among them so that there should have been such an heart in each one of them? But He did not do this. He longed that they should have hearts to obey Him; but in His infinite wisdom He set bounds to His power, so that He did not, by a miracle, effect in them what He desired. By one single word of His power, God could have created in each one of these Israelites a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within him—that very spirit which God desired that they should have; but God did not do this.

And so with His own Son, when He wept over Jerusalem. By one word of His power our Saviour could, in one moment, have made each one in that devoted city to “know the things which belonged to his peace.” By one word of His power He could have compelled each one amongst them to come and take shelter from God’s wrath under the shadowing wings of His salvation—one word from Him would have turned all their hearts.

And that word He withheld, even whilst He wept over their impenitence. Now, why did He withhold this word of power that would at once, in a moment, have enlightened and softened every heart? Because, my brethren, it would have been contrary to the rule of all His dealings with immortal spirits to have done so. He wants a very different thing

from rational and immortal spirits from what He wants from irrational machines. From machines, from mere senseless tools without heart, without understanding, without will, we want nothing but the work they do, or which we do by them. If a watch or a clock tells us the time correctly, it is all we want of it. If the main-spring is broken, or out of order, we take it to pieces, and put in another. It matters nothing to us, whether it is the same watch or not. But from a son or a daughter we look for far more than we do from a piece of clock-work; we look for a return of love, we look for obedience on principle, we look for the response of soul to soul, we look for a will the same as ours. If the son or the daughter do not love us, it would never do to put a totally different soul within their bodies; for though in that case we might have more obedience, it would not be from our son or our daughter. Now, the clock and the watch has no will; it is not a person; it is not answerable for going right or wrong; it cannot be rewarded or punished; it cannot love; it cannot hate; it does not know when it obeys, and when it disobeys. But the contrary to all this is the case with a reasonable man. He has a will; he is answerable for doing right or wrong; he has a conscience which tells him when he does right or wrong; he can love; he can hate.

Now, if you think a little on this, it will help you to see how God cannot treat a soul as we would treat a watch or a clock. If a soul goes wrong by departing from Him, God, according to the wise and necessary rules He has laid down for the government of His intelligent creatures, cannot change it on exactly the same principles, and in the same way as, when the main-spring of a watch is broken, we get another and an altogether different one to supply its place. God does change souls, blessed be His holy name! He renews them, He converts them; but He does all this in such a way that the *person* is still the same. It is the same individual man all the way through, from beginning to end, or there could be no probation here and no judgment hereafter. Nothing can be more different than the thoughts and inclinations of the true saint, from those which he had when he was a sinner; but the man, the individual, is the same person.

Now, of course, I know as well as you do the difficulty of all this, the unfathomable gulf of which I am now upon the brink; but what I have to do with is not speculation, but *fact*. It is not a matter of speculation, but of fact, that God says in my text, respecting His people Israel, "Oh that there were such a heart in them!" and yet there was *not* this heart in them, though God could have brought it about in a moment.

I have, then, to bring this my text home to you, for you now before me occupy the place of God's people of old.

Just as God, when He looked upon His people of old, said, "Oh that there were a heart in them to fear Me, and keep My commandments always!" so God looks upon you, and says of you, "Oh that there were a heart in you to repent of sin, and turn to Me through My dear Son!"

Well, then, why does not God, seeing He desires you to have new loving obedient hearts, at once put them within you? Because He must treat you as reasonable responsible beings, not as machines. God can do many things for you, but there are some things which He cannot do. He cannot repent instead of you; He cannot believe instead of you; He cannot love instead of you. He has, blessed be His holy name, suffered for you, and He has died for you, and He has atoned by His sufferings upon the cross for your sins; but He cannot repent instead of you, or in you. He can give you repentance, but you must repent for yourselves. He can bring before you your sin, and do all to lead you to repent, but repentance is your personal work. You must yourself repent, you must yourself be sorry, you must yourself be grieved and ashamed of yourself, you must yourself turn away from the accursed thing.

Where His work upon you ends, and where yours begins, you and I can never know. It is one of the most secret things of God ; but that your will must co-operate with His, and your heart meet His love, and, before all this, your soul itself personally taste the bitterness of the healing draught which His hand holds out,—this is as certain as that you are here.

And so with faith in His dear Son, He can, and He does, set before your soul's eye what Jesus Christ has done for you—how He has become incarnate, and how He has been crucified for you, how there and then He made satisfaction for your sins : and, besides this, He can help you to believe. He can help your unbelief; but you have a dreadful power within you, which is, that when Christ calls you, you can stop your ears; when He invites you to come, you can draw back.

Yes, you have to yield yourselves to God, a thing which the apostle tells you, your baptism lays upon you. (Rom. vi. 3, 4, 11, 12, 13.) This you must do ; and it is what God is now looking for in the case of each one among you.

Consider, then, that God desires you thus to yield your heart to Him—thus to have the heart to obey, love, and serve Him; not for His profit, but for yours; that it may be well with you, and with your children for ever. That it may be well with you—well with you

through an endless eternity; and it cannot be well with you in eternity unless you in very deed surrender yourselves to God now, at this present time, in this mortal life. Well with you, too, in a way far above the best wishes of your heart. You know how God makes you sometimes very happy here, even whilst you are a sinner, and in a body of sin and death, and in an evil world. Oh, trust Him, then, that He can do for you, and will do for you more than your heart can wish, in a world where there is neither sin nor sorrow! And if you have not this heart towards God, for your own sake, at least try and have it *for the sake of your children*.—"O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, that it might be well with them, *and with their children for ever*."

You love your children,—love, then, their souls. For the sake of your children's souls, that you may not meet them on the left hand of the Judge, and hear their reproaches in a miserable eternity, turn to God, through Jesus Christ, and cleave to Him steadfastly when you have turned.

What is the reason why, with all the pains that we take in Sunday and day schools, children grow up so ungodly? It is mainly on account of one thing—the wretched unchristian example they see in their parents. You destroy their souls by your

careless evil example, and so undo, as far as you can, all the work of their Christian teachers.

For the sake, then, of your own and your children's eternal well-being, ask God for, and give God no rest, till you obtain from Him, each one of you, a new heart, a clean heart, a contrite heart, a believing heart, a steadfast persevering heart—that heart for which you are supposed to pray so often—"a heart to love and dread Him, and diligently to live after His commandments."

SERMON XXI.

“IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT I GO AWAY.”

JOHN xvi. 7.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you.”

IN the first words of the text we have a wonderful and affecting instance of Christ's condescension to the weakness of His people: the Son of God, the incarnate Truth, introduces what He says to His disciples with the words “*I tell you the truth.*”

There must be something very deep in the announcement itself, and something in it very hard for flesh and blood to receive in its fulness, when the incarnate Truth prefaces it with such words. And when we come to consider the thing which He proceeds to reveal we can no longer feel surprised that He should so prepare them for it, for it is nothing less than the necessity for His own departure: “I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if *I* go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” Here, then, was a truth of such a sort that the very earnestness

of their love would hinder their faith from receiving it. They knew Him, but they did not know the Comforter — they loved Him, for during three years they had known Him intimately, and seen how good and holy, and gentle and wise, He was; and the more they loved Him, the more would it be difficult for them to believe that He ought to depart in order that He might send to supply His place One Whom as yet they knew not.

And it is very remarkable that the discourse, of which the text forms a part, and which was spoken to the disciples after the institution of the Lord's Supper, when they were wending their sorrowful way from the paschal upper chamber to the garden of Gethsemane,—it is very remarkable, I say, that this, His last discourse, is occupied, not with explaining to them the nature of the atonement He was about to accomplish, but with preparing them for His own departure and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Again and again He joins together the one and the other.

And in the text He asserts that the greatness of the gift of the Holy Ghost is such that it will more than compensate for His own visible presence.

He has withdrawn His presence, and we are now living in that dispensation of the Spirit which He thus pronounces so exceedingly blessed. Let us, humbly praying for the

help of the same Spirit, strive to realize in what the blessedness of this our present state consists; and in order to do this, let us set before ourselves what we lose by Christ's absence, so that by comparison we may the better understand what we gain by the Comforter's presence.

Now, I am sure that there is no Christian before me who has not at some time or other allowed thoughts of this kind to cross his mind. Why did Christ leave His Church as soon as He had accomplished His great work of atonement on her behalf? Why did He leave the scene of His conflict at the moment of His triumph?

Why did He not stop to perfect the work which He had begun?—why was one generation only, and that a faithless and perverse one, to hear the words of Him who spake as never man spake, and to see the works which proclaimed Him to be God manifest in the flesh?

And then we have gone over in thought what, perhaps, we fondly supposed would have been the blessings inevitably attending His continued stay on earth.

Supposing that He had veiled the glories of His Godhead, as He did when He appeared to His disciples after He was risen, (and without this it is manifest that He could not have made this earth His habitation, and yet con-

tinued mankind in anything like a state of trial or probation,) supposing, I say, that He had continued on earth, and manifested His presence in it as the Sovereign of His Church, we perhaps have imagined that some such blessings as these must have necessarily accompanied such a state of things.

In the first place, the Church with such a living Head would long ere this have subdued to itself the whole world.

There would have been no infidelity with such a living proof continually before men's eyes of God's power in raising the dead.

Centuries before this the yet unfulfilled prophecy would have been accomplished, that the heathen should have become His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession.

And besides this, we have imagined that the internal advantages to the Church itself would have been unspeakably great.

First of all, it would have had a *visible* recognised Head that could have at once pronounced with authority on all matters of dispute that have at various times and places rent its unity, and marred its charity, and given occasion to its adversaries to blaspheme.

Those controversies would have been at once and for ever set at rest which arose in the beginning, and have ever been reappearing, respecting the deep things of the Divine nature,

the extent of God's calling, the relative places of faith, works, sacraments, the limits of the ministerial commission, and the nature of its credentials.

Then we, perhaps, have imagined what would have been the unity of the Church when He was present to repress divisions, what its purity when He was ever at hand to expel the buyers and sellers from the sanctuary, what its peace when He was ever walking upon the waters, what its order, what the excellence of its government when He, as its visible and acknowledged Head, would have designated those who should bear rule under Him, as He appointed His disciples at the first.

And then, with respect to ourselves, we have thought what would have been our faith, what our love, what our holiness, what our truth, if we could have but once seen the visible manifestation of God's holiness, and truth, and love.

In one word, we have pictured to ourselves what would have been our advantages, and how we must have improved them, had God allowed us to live in a dispensation of sight rather than of faith.

Such, then, are the advantages which we have lost by the withdrawal of the sensible presence of the Son of God.

Our Saviour, in my text, assures us of the

certainty of two things—first, that these and all other imaginable advantages of His sensible presence are, in this our state of probation, more than compensated by the gift of His Spirit; and secondly, that His own absence is the condition of the Spirit's presence: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."

The reasons for this latter mystery of godliness are not revealed to us in the Scriptures; suffice it to say, that many divines of eminence have considered that the whole Christian scheme, from the fall to the consummation of all things, was designed not only to restore a ruined race, but to show forth, in a way that would otherwise have been impossible, the threefold personality of Almighty God, and so it was needful that there should be a manifestation of the Spirit as well as of the Son, and this could not be whilst the Son was visibly present.

We have, then, to consider, that every imaginable advantage of Christ's bodily presence is more than compensated by the gift of God's Spirit, consequent upon Christ's ascension.

Many reasons clearly deducible from the word of God could be given for this; let us fix our attention upon *one*.

Almighty God brings about the wise and good ends of His providence by means which He in His wisdom sees best adapted

to promote His glory and the good of His creatures.

Now, it is one of the good ends of God's providence that His redeemed creatures should be supremely happy in eternity, and that this happiness should consist in their doing His will, and carrying out His designs, in a far higher state of being than their present one.

God can, if He chooses, render them capable of this by a momentary act of His power, but in His infinite wisdom He sees that this gracious end will be best brought about by their being educated for this state of perfection *in this their state of probation.*

God has taken two methods of thus training or educating His people : first, by a state of things which was (at its commencement, at least) a dispensation of sight. In this He endeavoured to make His people live to Him by perpetually manifesting His presence and power amongst them in the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, the miraculous shower of manna, the water streaming from the flinty rock, the sudden and instantaneous punishment of offenders, and temporal prosperity the reward of obedience.

All this, as He foresaw, failed in its effect to renew the heart, or even to enforce outward obedience, only He tried it for our sakes, that we might see in it, as in a glass, the need of a better state of things, based on another principle than that of sight, even on faith.

This second, this better state of things under which God trains us for the eternal enjoyment of His presence and the eternal service of Himself, is the dispensation of faith. It is a dispensation in which the invisible Spirit takes the place of the visible Saviour, and works faith in the soul, and presents to the soul's eye Jesus Christ as the object of faith, and by a marvellous process transforms the soul to the image of Him on whom its eye is fixed, so that by this wondrous working of God the soul dead in sins is raised to life, and purified, and sanctified, and adorned with lovely graces, and strengthened with moral strength, and fortified with endurance such as could be produced in it by no other process. Now, for all this the absence of the Saviour is necessary; for His bodily presence, even supposing that He was invested with no higher glory than that in which He appeared to His disciples after His resurrection,—His bodily presence, I say, would have made this dispensation to be a dispensation of sight, far more effectually than the pillar of cloud and fire made the dispensation that preceded it to be such.

God, who knows what is best for us far better than what we ourselves do, and Whose eye can take in the whole of our eternity far more effectually than we can take in the view of any object set before us,—God sees that the character which will throughout eternity make us

most happy in Him and in ourselves, and most obedient to His will, can be best formed in us by our trusting in an unseen Saviour, relying upon an unseen atonement, leaning upon an unseen arm, committing ourselves to the leading hand of an unseen Guide, submitting our wills to an invisible Ruler, our minds and reasons to mysteries and judgments far above out of our sight, our steps to the guidance of a Providence always mysterious, sometimes shrouded with impenetrable gloom.

Now, all these are exercises of faith; and the exercise of faith, (which is but another term for living faith,) naturally produces love, good works, godly fear, according as it apprehends the love of Christ, or the promises or threatenings of God, or the glories of eternity.

If faith is, as God declares that it is, the root of those Christian graces and heavenly tempers which will make us happy through eternity, it is evident that the circumstance that Christ is absent is the main thing that calls it forth; for if Christ were present on earth manifesting His power as the Son of God, our faith would be at once lost in sight—it would cease to be faith.

And if we attentively consider the thing, we can easily see how the presence of Christ upon earth would hinder the exercise of faith, and consequently hinder the formation of that spiritual character which God will bless in eternity.

For instance, one of the chief things that strengthens in us true godliness is our perpetual struggle with the world—i.e., being in the world, exposed to its allurements, temptations, idolatries, and yet getting the better of these. This we do by so realizing, so mentally dwelling upon, unseen things, that they loosen the power over our minds of the things we see. We consequently become, in a measure, dead to the world whilst we are living in it. Now this struggle is of all others the one that calls out, and exercises, and strengthens all our spiritual powers, and consequently forms our spiritual character. I need not say that this struggle is the work of God's Spirit abiding in and working with our spirit.

Now, if the Son of God were present on earth as the risen and triumphant Head of His Church, the struggle of Christians with the world, if it could take place at all, would be a very different thing to what it now is—it stands to reason that it would not be the spiritual struggle which it now is—and consequently would not be calculated to form the character of the soldier of Christ as it does at present. Supposing that it could be maintained, we should be trusting to the protection of Christ with a trust similar (in kind) to that with which we trust in the protection of an earthly sovereign or any other arm of flesh.

But to advert to a particular form of this struggle and victory,—Martyrdom. There could have been no such thing as martyrdom if He for whom the martyrs shed their blood had been present on earth to rescue His servants from their persecutors, with an exercise of power like that with which He cast His captors to the earth ; but martyrdom is but the chief form among a multitude of lesser forms of humiliation, privation, and endurance, all borne by Christ's people for witnessing to the name of their unseen Saviour, and by the bearing of which their spirits have been refined like gold in the furnace for the highest joys and employments of God's eternal house.

There would have been little or no scope for self-sacrifice, or self-denial, in order to do good for Christ's sake to the bodies and souls of others, if Christ had been ever present to rectify, by the exertion of His miraculous power, all the evils of humanity ; and yet we can plainly see that self-sacrifice and self-denial are essential to us if our eternal happiness is to depend upon conformity to the likeness of our Saviour.

And so, if time permitted, we might take other spiritual graces, and show how the absence of our risen and glorified Head is necessary if the Holy Spirit is to call them forth and to perfect them after the example of Christ. Now, this necessity for Christ's absence, and

the consequent presence of the Spirit to supply His place, is no matter of mere speculation. It is one of the most deeply practical matters which can occupy the mind of a Christian, for it is the great means of convincing us of the inconceivable value of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the danger of trifling with it, and the advantage that the present dispensation of faith gives us for obtaining that conformity to Christ's character on which our happiness throughout eternity will depend. We have no doubt all of us often thought that, if we had lived in the presence of Christ when on earth, we should certainly have enjoyed advantages in working out our salvation which we do not now possess. Christ, on the contrary, assures us most solemnly that the presence of the Comforter to work faith in us is more expedient for us in this our day of trial than His own visible dwelling amongst us. Are we, then, alive to the power of this wonderful Gift of God? Are we alive to the fact that His presence,—His converting, renewing, strengthening, comforting, sanctifying presence,—is far more needful to us than the sensible presence of Christ? This is hard to believe, but Christ solemnly and emphatically assures us that it is so, "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away."

What use, then, are we making of this dispensation of the Spirit? Are we throwing it

away by grieving, resisting, quenching this Heavenly Gift? Or are we making that use of this our day of probation that God intends, by yielding ourselves to His blessed suggestions, obeying His calls, following His leading, cherishing His influences. God intends that this our day of grace should be our school time for a blessed eternity. God's Son has withdrawn Himself from our sight, and ascended into heaven, in order that God's Spirit may work in us in the way most effectual to our eternal well-being. For this His Spirit has descended and taken up His abode in the Church. If we submit ourselves to Him, everything which can befall us will be made to work together for our good.

But how must we submit ourselves? We must submit our hearts to Him to be broken up by repentance, and to be purified by a true and living faith—our desires to be set on holiness and truth, our hopes to be fixed on God's promises, our affections to be set on things above, our carnal lusts to be mortified, our flesh to be subdued to the spirit. By doing this we shall make that use of His grace which God intended when He brought us into His Church. We shall so pass through things temporal as to gain the things eternal. We shall be daily growing in that character for the formation of which in us sinners Christ died, and the Spirit has been sent, and the

Church gathered out of the world, and the whole scheme of providence and grace, co-working together, set on foot—that character on which God will through eternity look with infinite complacency, as being the image and likeness of His own.*

* The reader will notice, at the commencement of the foregoing sermon, an expression or two similar to some in a discourse on the same text by an eminent living writer. The line, however, which I have taken in considering the subject is altogether different. This is not because I do not recognise that the Sacramental presence of Christ is "by the Holy Ghost," but because that view of the Redeemer's words has been expounded by a multitude of writers, and the explanation in my sermon is obviously true, though not the whole truth.

SERMON XXII.

THE ASCENSION.

ST. MARK xvi. 19.

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”

ON this Sunday, the Sunday after Ascension-day, the Christian is in perplexity. He is like one who stands on the narrow ridge of a lofty mountain having two glorious prospects, one on each side, and he hardly knows on which to gaze. He looks down, first at one, then at the other, and is in doubt which of the two is the grandest, which the most inspiring. I say the Christian is in this state of perplexity on this Sunday, for it is the Sunday after Ascension-day and the Sunday before Pentecost. Ascension-day is the day on which God's Son, clothed in a new nature, re-entered the heaven He had left for our sakes, and began to reap His eternal reward. On Ascension-day He left this scene of His humiliation, and in His manhood was glorified with the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. On Ascension-day the hosts of heaven received Him back in triumph to the

place He had left for our sakes. Ranks upon ranks of ministering spirits, the countless hosts of God's unfallen sons, welcomed back the Conqueror of death and hell. They welcomed Him back as God, for He who had humbled Himself was very God; they welcomed Him back with the words of man, for He who had overcome was very man.

"But," you will say, "how could this be? How know we this? Did the angels in heaven receive Jesus with a song made by man?" Yes, we know that they did. They welcomed Him with a Psalm, not with a song composed in some tongue of angels by an angel bard, but with a Psalm written by the sweet singer of Israel. We know the burden of what they sung. We ourselves, poor sinners though we are, dared to sing the same Psalm on Thursday. Its burden was, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? It is the Lord, strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? Even the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory."

Such was the song which the angels sang on the great day of Christ's return to heaven. But we know that there was another voice of

welcome, and it is given us to know the words of that voice. He who said at the beginning, "Let there be light;" He who said again, "This is my beloved Son;" He—the Lord God—in the hearing of all heaven, said to our Lord, "Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool;" and it is given to us to know other words of God, even the words of the oath with which He confirmed the everlasting Mediatorship of the Son of man—"The Lord swears, and will not repent; Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec."

My brethren, we know that all these things took place in heaven on the day on which Christ left this world, for we read them in Holy Scripture. Such are the things that we commemorate on the festival just past. And ten days afterwards, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Saviour, who ascended in the body which He had assumed, returned again to earth by the Spirit: He who had left His disciples in outward appearance and bodily presence, came again to them in a marvellous and unspeakable way, and is now with us far more intimately and effectually than He was when in the flesh, living amongst men as one of themselves. On Pentecost, the rod of Christ's power—that is, the Holy Spirit—was sent by the Lord out of Zion, and He became Ruler, even in the midst among His enemies. Then, on that day of His power, did the people offer

to Him "free will offerings with an holy worship." Then did God begin to gather out the Church to be the Eve of the second Adam. Then came the kingdom of God with power. Then was the gospel net first cast into the deep and wide sea of this world's nations, and peoples, and tongues, never to be drawn ashore till the consummation and the final separation. Then sprang up the mighty tree, in its beginning small as the grain of mustard seed, in its growth a shelter to the kings of the earth. Then did the chosen vine of God bend down from heaven that all men might be grafted into it, and receive of its sweetness and of its strength. Then did old things pass away and all things become new. Then did the circumcision of the flesh give way to the baptism of regeneration, and the eating of the paschal lamb to the Communion of the Lamb of God. Then was the Aaronic priesthood superseded by the apostolic ministry of reconciliation, and a religion of types and shadows by a kingdom of spiritual realities. All this began on the great day of Pentecost. We are living in the light then shed abroad. We are living in the Spirit then, once for all, poured forth among men.

Such are the two festivals, on one of which we look back, to the other of which we look forward, on this day.

But, my brethren, the Christian minister cannot hesitate as to what he is to dwell upon

on this Sunday, for Pentecost is a Sunday festival, and so on that day the children of the Church attend in her courts in their wonted numbers, but with the festival of the Ascension it is, I am ashamed to say, far otherwise—a mere handful of worshippers gather together to praise God that He has exalted One in our nature, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, as our Mediator, Advocate, and Covenant head at His right hand.

Let our Lord's ascension, then, be our theme to-day ; and let us bless God that there is not only a Thursday, but a Sunday, set apart for the ministers of the Church to bring before their people the great things wrapped up in, and the great things depending upon, the ascension of Jesus Christ.

The fact of the ascension is this :—The Man Christ Jesus, after He had shown perfectly the person, will, and character of God under the aspect and conditions of a man's life, and after He had offered Himself up a full and sufficient sacrifice for all sin, and when all which He had to do in this world was well done, ascended into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of God—that is, in the highest and most honourable place in the creation of God.

He took His seat there as one of us, as our covenant-head, as our elder brother, as one who has the same relationship as we have to the God and Father of all ; for He has ascended

to His Father and our Father, His God and our God, so that on the very throne of the Ruler of all things visible and invisible, there is One who has a man's heart, and who takes unspeakable interest in human nature and all that pertains to it, for He has taken it into His Godhead. He has purchased the glory of being its King and its Judge by His humiliation even to death, and He will have His eternal joy in furthering the happiness of those saved from among that race over which He has assumed the Headship. Such is a general view of what is wrapped up in Christ's ascension.

But the mere simple fact is, when we really and steadily face it, beyond and above all thought—for it is no less than this, that God is now ruling all worlds by a Man Who once lived amongst us as our fellow man—there is a Man now at the right hand of God, with the whole universe at His absolute disposal.

On a particular day in the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, when all things were going on as they had been from the beginning, the sun shining, the whole face of nature looking as it had ever done, whilst man was busy about his every-day pursuits, buying, selling, plotting, scheming,—on this day, in an obscure province of the great universal empire, a small band of

men might have been seen accompanying another Man as He led them from a city to a small village in its neighbourhood. There would have been nothing in that little band to strike you had you met them; you would have passed them without taking any notice of them, or remembering the circumstance.

Nevertheless, God's light had never shone on another such as He who was then leading forth this little company. For three years He had been their own familiar friend, and during these years they had seen Him from day to day doing wonders far beyond the utmost power or skill of man—they had seen the very grave surrender its prisoners at His bidding. But more than all this, they had seen this very Man crucified in the sight of a scoffing and blaspheming crowd.

They had seen Him with His breast pierced, and yet there He was among them as the conqueror of death. On the third day after He had breathed out his soul in death that soul had, according to His word, returned and reanimated His body. He came again amongst them as one of themselves, and yet not as one of themselves. They knew well the loved features. They were assured that He was no disembodied spirit, for they had handled and felt Him. He had about Him, evident to their senses, the wounds which wicked men had inflicted on

Him; and yet He was not as He had been before His death. Before His death He was just like other men. He went in and out among them, and was never out of their sight. Now a marvellous change had come upon His body; He suddenly came among them, and as suddenly vanished. All this had happened during forty days, ever since His resurrection. He was yet their loving friend, He ate and drank with them, and He asked them whether they loved Him; but yet He cast about Himself a mystery which awed and confounded them.

And now He leads them forth to the top of a hill, and there is a presentiment that He is going to be taken from them; perhaps He told them so expressly. They came to Bethany, and they gather round to hear the last words. It is their commission, "Go ye to all the world;" "Go ye to every creature." And then there is the leave-taking—it is, as we should have expected, by blessing. He lifted up His hands—His pierced hands—and blessed them; and then slowly and majestically His body rises up. As they gaze after Him a cloud receives Him, and they see Him no more.

Such was the sight seen by eyes of flesh and blood in this world. We are told in the word of God what immediately followed upon this, what awaited this Jesus in the unseen world. "I saw in the night visions,"

says Daniel, a prophet of God, — “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel vii. 13, 14.) Such was what took place, first on earth, then in heaven, on Ascension-day.

And now for the issues of this, and its bearing on ourselves. From this ascension of Christ, we learn first the dignity of human nature, the true dignity of our race. The dignity of our race is to be gathered not from its having produced such men as Homer, or Plato, or Shakespeare, or Newton, or because one of its generations built the Pyramids, and another struck out the electric telegraph; but from this, that One belonging to it has been found worthy to take His seat at the right hand of God.

Here, then, is the honour and glory of human nature. Its second Original, its Head, its King, is at the right hand of God. Put together all else of which man assumes to be proud—put together all the virtues of the good, all the daring of the brave, all the

energy of the strong-willed, all the endurance of the martyrs for liberty, or country, or conscience, all the aspirations of the large-hearted—fling into the heap every precious product of genius or patient industry that you think can add a lustre to your species—and it is all, multiplied ten thousand times, but as the small dust of the balance when weighed against this, that the Head, the Representative, the last Adam of the race, is now at the right hand of God.

Then, in the ascension of Jesus Christ, we have an earnest and foreshadowing of the greatness of the eternal future of man. What, my brethren, is to be the hereafter of the Church if it is to be in keeping—in accordance with the ascension? The most precious things upon earth are the rare and costly stones with which we adorn the diadems of monarchs and the breasts of heroes. In a vision of the eternal city these most precious things are but its foundations, whilst its streets are of gold, and its gates pearls. What do such images, if images they are, shadow forth but the profusion of glory that will be poured upon it! and is all this to be wondered at, seeing that its Maker is at the right hand of God, and exalted there to prepare a place for His brethren? St. Paul, the blessed apostle, the most large-hearted of saints, in speaking of the eternal destiny of Christians, measures the power and goodness

of God that will be displayed in it by the ascension of Christ. He does this when he prays for his Ephesian brethren that they may realize what is the greatness of God's power to those who believe—"which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places: and hath put all things under His feet." (Ephes. i. 20, 22.) He takes the same measure of our future in well-known words in the next chapter. "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Christ has ascended as our Head—the Head of the Church and its representative. If God, then, has thus exalted and glorified the Head, and we are His members, what must eventually be the greatness of their destiny who at the last will be "found in Him?" What will be the end of God's kindness and goodness towards us if the Ascension is its beginning?

From the Ascension we gather the safety of those who commit their way to God through His Son. "Who is He," an apostle asks, "who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" What is there that can hurt the true Christian—really hurt him? "All things," says the apostle, "work together

for good to them that love God; to them that are the called according to His purpose." All things, even the things that seem to be against him—such as sharp temptations, persecutions, and distress—are not really against him, for Christ, at God's right hand, controls all, orders all, tempers all. With Christ at God's right hand there is nothing accidental;—nothing unforeseen can happen to the members of the "Head over all things."

From Christ's ascension we gather the sure and certain forgiveness of those who plead His merits, if they humbly and faithfully use the means which He has ordained for the conveyance of His grace. "If any man sin, we have an advocate WITH the Father,"—WITH the Father, *i. e.*, at His very right hand. None can be nearer to the ear of God than Christ is, none can ask the attention of God as Christ can.

Oh, my Christian brother, see to it that you engage this Advocate, and retain Him too, as yours. You have been baptized into that body to which belongs the promise of forgiveness, and the ministry of reconciliation, and the cup which is the new covenant in His blood which was shed for you. Are you forgiven? If you are not, it must be because you are not in real earnest desiring to be rid of all sin, and pleading the blood that cleanses from it. With such an Advocate assigned to

you by God, it is your fault if you are yet at a distance from God. How could God show His desire that you should be forgiven, and fully restored to His love and favour, more than by the place to which He has exalted your Advocate? When your accuser accuses you, He has to accuse you before a throne on which is seated your Advocate. What, then, should be your prayers for forgiveness? what your confidence that God has forgiven, forgives, and will forgive?

Lastly, from Christ's ascension we gather what is the goodness, and holiness, and truth, and obedience, to which we are called. The calling of Christians is to have Christ within them as the hidden life of their souls. (Gal. ii. 20, iv. 19; Col. i. 27.)

This is what the apostle means by saying that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of "knowing Christ, *and the power of His resurrection*, and the fellowship of His sufferings." This is what the apostle means when he says that, "being reconciled, we shall be saved *by His life*;" for in a marvellous way the Christian is strengthened by the very strength of Christ—nay, lives by His very life. Christ is the true Vine and the second Adam. As we derive sin and weakness from the first Adam, so we must derive righteousness and strength from the second Adam. The Holy Spirit brings this about, and so

by His operation we are made partakers of the very goodness and strength of Christ. To this end Christ is exalted to the right hand of God, that His human nature may be the fountain of grace and strength to us.

So that Christians who look to Christ have a hidden life on the very throne of God. Now does this seem too great, too wonderful? It should not, for it is the plain truth of Scripture. "If ye then," the apostle says, "be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1—3.)

"Your life hid with Christ in God." What a marvellous way of speaking respecting men yet in flesh and blood! What does he mean by it? Why, he means that each one of us, if we will but apply for it, has a life to live to God, a strength to resist sin, and to keep God's commandments, on the very throne of God.

Well, but what a thing is this! Is it not too great, too high a thing for common Christians, now-a-days, like us, to think about? Must not Christians be very holy indeed, very great saints, before they can make use of such a doctrine, or even take it on their lips? On the contrary, St. Paul brings forward this doctrine about our "life hid with Christ" to keep men from the most debasing sins. "Your life,"

he says, "is hid with Christ in God. Mortify THEREFORE"—that is, because you have a life thus hid with Christ—mortify, on this account, "your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Col. iii. 5.)

Now, my brethren, mark this extraordinary place of Scripture, for in it you see that the highest grace is brought to bear against the commission of the lowest and grossest vice. What grace can be higher than a "life hid with Christ in God?" What sins can be lower than fornication, and the other vile things here mentioned? And yet the possession of this highest grace is urged by the apostle as the reason for the mortification of these lowest sins.

How universal, then, is the practical bearing of the Ascension of Christ! It gives wings to the highest aspirations, and it would, if realized, crush the lowest propensities. There is nothing too great for it, and there is nothing too low for it. It has to do with the dignity of our nature, it has to do with the destinies of our race, it has to do with the daily cries for forgiveness of each one of us, it has to do with our daily battle of life, and it has to do with the daily temptations that beset the path of one and all, and our daily as well as our eventual victory over those temptations.

SERMON XXIII.

THE HOLY GHOST A PERSON.

PSALM lxxviii. 18.

“Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men ; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

NONE of the doctrines or mysteries of our faith can be contemplated by themselves. They are all knit together by a twofold band—they all are manifestations of One God in Three Persons, and they are all manifestations of these Three Persons co-operating together for *one* purpose—the salvation of lost souls.

We cannot, for instance, contemplate the mystery of Christmas by itself, for all the blessedness of the *birth* of Him Who then was manifest in our flesh depends on this, that He who was born as on that day was the Very and Eternal God whom, on Sunday next, we shall glorify as existing from everlasting in Three Persons.

We cannot contemplate the doctrine of the Resurrection by itself, for He Who rose from the dead was the same as He Who was crucified for our sins ; and He who on the Cross poured forth blood of such surpassing

worth that it was a world's ransom, was able to do *this* because He had taken upon Him our nature, so that God and man are "One Christ, who suffered for our salvation."

We cannot contemplate the doctrine of the Ascension by itself, for He who ascended ascended in the nature which He had assumed. He left the glory of His Father to be clothed with our nature, and in our nature He re-assumed the glory which, as the Second Person in the Godhead, He had had with His Father before the world was.

And neither can we contemplate the mystery of this blessed day—the day of Pentecost—by itself, whether we look to the Person who, as on this day, was sent, or the Person who sent Him, or the purposes for which He came down.

He who was sent was the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

He who sent Him was the Son of God, who received Him without measure for *our* sakes, according to the words of the Psalm we have this day sung, "Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

And the Spirit came down, not merely to make men virtuous or holy, but to testify to the work, to apply the merits, to make present in an unspeakable way the Person of the Son,

according to His promise, "*I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.*" (John xiv. 18—20.)

On this day, then, let us, relying on God's promised blessing, consider the Deity and Personality of the Holy Ghost, as bearing on His mission and work.

The Person of the Spirit is thus spoken of in one of the Articles of our branch of the Church: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

At first sight there appears little said in Scripture respecting the Divine dignity of the Blessed Spirit. Once He is called God, in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where Ananias, because he lied to the Holy Ghost, is said not to have lied unto men but unto God; in another place (2 Cor. v.) He is called Lord, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." Then God's incommunicable attribute of omniscience is ascribed to Him when He is said to search all things, even the deep things of God, (1 Cor. ii. 10;) and in one of the Psalms (cxxxix.) omnipresence is ascribed to Him; and in a passage in the Epistle to the

Hebrews, Eternity, another incommunicable attribute of Deity, is said to belong to Him, for He is called the "Eternal Spirit." Then we infer, from its being said that in the beginning He "moved upon the face of the waters," that He took part in the creation of the worlds. And we give Him divine worship because we are, by Christ's command, baptized into His name equally with that of the Father and of the Son, (Matt. xxviii. 19;) and St. Paul invokes His blessing equally with that of the Father and Christ in the well-known benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all evermore." (2 Cor. xiii.)

That so little comparatively should be said in Scripture respecting His divinity is precisely what we should expect from what our Lord says of Him, that He should come to bear witness to Christ; and when we come to look into it we find that the belief in the Spirit's Godhead so depends upon the belief in our Saviour's Godhead, that no person who really accepts Christ as his Lord and God can possibly help acknowledging the Spirit to be Lord and God also. The one depends on the other, for it was by the Holy Ghost that our Lord was what He was, and did what He did for our redemption.

It was by the operation of the Holy Ghost that He was incarnate, and that He took upon

Him our nature. (Luke i. 35.) It was by the Holy Ghost that His human nature was sanctified. (Matt. iii. 16.) It was by the same Spirit that He was anointed to preach: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me." (Luke iv. 18.) By the same Spirit, He did as man His wonderful works. (Matt. xii. 28.) By the same Spirit hallowing His sacrifice on the cross, He offered Himself without spot to God. (Heb. ix. 14.) By the Spirit was He raised from the dead. (1 Peter iii. 18.) By the same Spirit He now resides in and rules over the Church, and hereafter by the same Spirit He will raise the bodies of His saints. (Rom. viii. 11.) For all these co-operations of the Spirit in the works of the Son we have the express words of Scripture; and it is, of course, preposterous to suppose that He whose co-working with God's Son is necessary to effect these greatest works of God can be anything else than a Divine Person of one substance, power, and eternity, with the Father and the Son.

But the thing respecting Him that we most need to realize is His distinct personality, for the realizing of this tends to a practical result of extreme importance to our Christian life.

Owing to the necessary feebleness of all human language in bringing home to us the deep things of the Godhead, the name that is given to the Third Person of the Trinity does

not necessarily express to us the distinctness of His personality. When we speak of the spirit of a *man*, we speak of that which is in *no* sense separate from the person of the man himself; but our Lord, in promising the Holy Spirit, promises Him as ANOTHER—"I will pray the Father, and He will send you ANOTHER Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." (John xiv. 16, 17.) In these few words we have three evidences of His personality. He does the work of a person—a friend in *comforting*; He is ANOTHER Comforter, distinct in person from Him who was then leaving the world; and men knew Him as a person. "*The world knoweth Him not.*" "*Ye know Him.*"

Then, men sin against Him, and if He can be sinned against, He must be a person; and because the sin against Him is unpardonable, He must be a Divine person: and as a person He governs the Church, and appoints its ministers and their work. Thus we read that He said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them," (Acts xiii. 2;) and He divides His miraculous gifts "to every man severally, as He, [the Spirit,] wills," (1 Cor. xii. 11;) and Christians who persist in sin are said to grieve Him, to provoke Him, to do Him despite,

all which imply that He is a person, not a thing.

Now, all this is of great practical importance to enable us to estimate aright His work, for it is to be feared that none of us realize as we ought, that God does not work in the Church, or in our souls, by a sort of influence from Himself, an influence answering to the unconscious influences of nature; but that He works in us by a Person One with Himself in Godhead, holiness, dignity, power, and love.

Thus, when we pray to God to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit," we do not pray that God may work in our souls after the same order of working whereby an artificer purifies unconscious ore by the action of equally unconscious fire; or as we cleanse the water in a stagnant pool, or the air in a crowded room, by letting in a stream of pure water, or pure air. Nor, when we pray to be renewed by God's Spirit, do we pray that God may change our souls by infusing a leaven of holiness into them which may change them as the unconscious leaven by a certain natural law ferments and changes the meal in which it is hid. No, we do not pray that God may act on us by a holy influence from Himself, but we pray that He may send into us an Holy Person, God, like Himself.

We pray that this Holy Spirit may act on us, not as *one thing* acts on another, but as *one*

person acts on another. If we had an holy man in our company, he would in conversation suggest holy thoughts by holy words, and by his very presence he would prevent unholy words; and it may be that the consciousness of his goodness would repel unholy thoughts, though we were conscious that he could not read our hearts.

Now, we pray for the acting on us of such a presence, unseen yet personal, when we pray for the Cleansing, the Enlightening, the Sanctifying, Spirit of God. He is a person, and as such He acts in us. He is an intelligent Spirit, and as such He suggests good desires; and because He is a person, He looks for a personal response from our inmost souls to His blessed suggestions. He is a person, and as such, when we resist Him, we grieve Him, we grieve His love; for in resisting Him we resist divine goodness, we forsake our own mercy, and, awful thought! He is no other than the Third Person in the Godhead, and so, when we grieve Him, resist Him, provoke Him, oppose Him, we grieve, resist, provoke God.

Brethren, is it not appalling to think, that if you or I commit sin, we sin not only against a God above us, and a God about us, but against a God within us? that when you or I resist convictions, stifle conscience, cherish evil tempers, malice, or pride, give way to envy, stir

up strife, shut up our bowels of compassion from our needy fellow-Christians, neglect known duties, or willingly harbour any uncleanness of heart, by so doing we are grieving, vexing, provoking, rebelling against GOD—GOD WITHIN US? And this is not all—we are sinning against a Spirit who, by His indwelling in the Church, makes present our Risen and Ascended Saviour.

How practical, then, is this doctrine of the personality and Deity of God's Spirit! With what force should it bring home to our hearts such precepts as "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you," (Phil. ii. 13;) such truths as "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. vi. 19;) such inferences as "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. v. 25.) If we could but habitually lay to heart the truth of the personality of the Spirit, joined with the truths of His Deity and His indwelling, what carefulness would it work in us that our hearts should be worthy of Such a Guest! what indignation against ourselves when we have been betrayed into any fault or sin that would grieve or vex Him! what fear lest He should be provoked to withdraw from us! what zeal to second to the best of our ability all His godly motions, to receive all His witness to our Lord, to enjoy all His consolations!

And this truth of the personality of the Indwelling Spirit is most practical on another account: it opens out to us another wondrous proof of the love of God—of His condescending, forbearing, long-suffering love? For consider, my brethren, what is the most striking example of God's long-suffering love? Is it not, that He bears so long with the ingratitude of sinners, who live, and move, and have their being in Him? He might take vengeance at any moment for the misuse of that life, that health, those faculties of body and soul, the use and enjoyment of which He preserves to the rebel, but He does not; and He bids us count His long-suffering as salvation—*i. e.*, He bids us consider that He spares us in order to lengthen out our day of grace. Now, this is God's long-suffering. The thing that constitutes it such transcendent long-suffering is, that God is a witness to every sin of the impenitent rebel whom He spares.

And this feature of God's goodness receives a still greater accession of glory when we consider how it appeared in His well-beloved Son during His sojourn among us. Did we ever seriously consider how it magnifies the continued condescension and forbearance of God that His Only Son should dwell for thirty years as one of ourselves amongst such sinners as we are?

He who then mixed among men as their

fellow-man, as one of themselves—*knew what was in them*. As He moved among men He read every thought of their hearts. Their most secret devices were naked and open to His eyes. For thirty years, then, the All-holy condescended to be in constant and friendly communication with sinners of all grades. For instance, we read of Him sitting at meat with them at the marriage in Cana and at the house of Simon the Leper. Now, when He did this He could not but be conscious of every thought which was working in every breast; every ambitious, every revengeful, every uncharitable, every deceitful, every covetous, every lustful heart would be open before Him as His eye glanced round on the guests. And so it would be in every assembly of His fellow-men. And yet intercourse with sinners such as none but He ever endured turned Him not from His purposes of love. No disgust that His holy soul must have felt at the latent hypocrisies that no eye but His could penetrate made Him quit the path which His love had marked out for Him, to live among them and to die for them—to live His allotted term among them, to die for them, nay, more, to choose from amongst such fallen creatures His Church, His Bride.

Was ever condescension and forbearance like to this? Yes, brethren, we have confessed this morning, “Such as the Father is, such

is the Son, and SUCH IS THE HOLY GHOST.” Such in divinity, such in power, such in majesty, such in long-suffering, condescension, and forbearance. The Son of God when on earth, though amongst men, was not *in* them; but He promised to return to them, and dwell in them *by the Spirit*. All the promises of the Spirit, whether in the Prophets or by Christ, betoken a far closer and more intimate union of God with man than had ever been before. The God who had dwelt among men in the temple of Jerusalem by the presence between the cherubim, and who had dwelt with men in the person of Jesus Christ, was to come yet closer to His sinful creatures; He was to be *in* them as a reprover of sin, a witness to God and His Son, and a well-spring of peace and holiness. “He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you.” Here, then, is the condescending love of the Spirit that He, the Living God, takes up His abode in the sinner—that He, the Living God, stoops to enter into, and to abide in his dark and sinful heart—that day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, He condescends to lighten the sinner’s darkness, to reason with his folly, to dispel his doubts, to work, it may be, on his fears, to fan into a flame his miserable spark of faith. How has He done all this, patiently done all this, with us who are alive here this day?

If we would realize the love of the Spirit, we must not only look into our Bibles—we

must look into our *memories*—we must each one, for ourselves, look into the history of God's grace vouchsafed to one and all of us. Then, I think, we shall see that though the Spirit did not, like God's Son, become incarnate for us, yet by dwelling and working in us He has indeed "borne the contradiction of sinners against Himself."

If these things are so—if God has indeed come down to dwell among His enemies—how sinful is sin, how great is God's love, how deeply should we repent, how unreservedly should we trust!

And how should they who are conscious of this indwelling, whose bitterest grief it is that they ever grieve, ever resist so divine a guest, whose most earnest prayer is that He would bring every thought of their hearts into subjection to the obedience of Christ, how should they rejoice!

Surely they whose hearts are full of these things cannot refrain themselves—at times, at least, they must be excited; they must be enthusiastic.

What were such Psalms as those we have used this morning inspired for but to enable our too cold hearts to apprehend, and our feeble lips to express, the joy that must flow forth, because of the presence within us of the fountain of all joy.

"Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts; in the city

of our God. God upholdeth the same for ever. We wait for Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple. O God, according to Thy name, so is Thy praise unto the world's end : Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let the Mount Zion rejoice, and the daughters of Judah be glad, because of Thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; and tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, set up (or consider well) her palaces, that ye may tell them that come after. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He shall be our guide unto death."

"Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon Thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was weary. Thy congregation shall dwell therein, for Thou, O God, hast of Thy goodness prepared for the poor. Praised be the Lord daily, even the God who helpeth us, and poureth His benefits upon us. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation: God is the Lord by whom we escape death. Thy God has sent forth strength for thee. Stablish the thing, O God, that Thou hast wrought in us. Ascribe ye the power to God over Israel: His worship and strength is in the clouds."

"O God, wonderful art Thou in Thy holy places, even the God of Israel: He will give strength and power unto His people; blessed be God."

S E R M O N XXIV.

ABIDING IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

2 JOHN, 9.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

GOD, in His holy Gospel, demands the full obedience of all the Christian's faculties—all his powers both of body and soul.

He has given to us everything which we have, in order that we may serve Him with it. We are body and soul, or spirit. We have an outer and an inner man, and with both these we must serve God.

We serve God in body when we bow before Him in lowly adoration of body, when for His sake, and in order that we may please Him, we keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity.

We serve God in soul, or spirit, when we bow our hearts before Him, when we give Him our hearts, when we offer to Him the prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings of renewed hearts, when we are careful to submit our will to His will, and to cleanse our hearts,

so that there may be nothing in them which may offend Him.

Now, one of the ways in which we are to submit our inner man to God is by submitting to His teaching. He condescends, in His word, to teach us respecting Himself, and His will, and His ways.

If He condescends to teach us respecting Himself, He, of course, expects us to learn what He teaches—to receive it—to search reverently into it—to feed mentally upon it; and if we draw back from His teaching, and refuse to be guided by it in our thoughts of Him, we, of course, commit a very grievous sin. When a child for any reason, such as indolence, or thoughtlessness, refuses to submit to the teaching of its parent, it commits a very grievous fault; but if it refuse that teaching because it thinks that it is wiser, and knows better, and that the parent's teaching is unsuitable, it exhibits a state of mind of which the folly, as well as the sin, is apparent.

Now, the text of my present sermon assures us, that as it is with a child and its parent's teaching, so it is with our souls and God's teaching; so that if we, for any reason, either reject it or hang back from it, or refuse to think about it, we commit a high sin against God. Our common sense might have told us that if God condescends to teach us, unteachableness with respect to His teaching

must be a grievous sin ; but God has not left it to our common sense to tell us this. He has in multitudes of Scriptures asserted it, and in no place more distinctly than in my text, where He declares not only the crime, but its punishment—viz., that the Christian who is unsubmitive to God as his teacher loses his part in God. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”

Now, in order to know what the doctrine of Christ is, we have to search the Scriptures ; but we are not, as some believe or speak as if they believed,—we are not, I say, in the position of those who have never known Christianity before, and have had the Bible put into their hands for the first time and been told, “This is the word of God ; take it, read it, and make out of it a body of doctrine for yourselves.” On the contrary, we have ourselves personally gathered few, if any, of the fundamental articles of our faith directly from the Bible. We have been taught them from the Bible, or from books founded on the Bible, by the lips of others—by our parents, our catechists, our spiritual pastors. In other words, we who are here have been brought up in the teaching of the Church. It is through the teaching of her ministers, or through the teaching of those who have consciously or unconsciously been instructed by her, that we have received the doctrine of Christ

Now, if there is one thing more than another that the Church has at all times, and in all places, been careful to *call* the doctrine of Christ, and to honour as the doctrine of Christ, and to teach as the doctrine of Christ, it is the doctrine of this Festival—the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. And if there is one truth more than another that the Church has been careful to guard as the doctrine of Christ, by impressing upon her members that he that abideth not in it hath not God, it is the mystery of the Trinity. We who are here now have heard the mind of the Church as embodied in the creed recited on this day, on the necessity of holding fast this sacred truth, too recently to doubt it.

Now, as the Church has thus authoritatively pronounced the doctrine of the Trinity to be the doctrine of Christ, to be abided in as we hope to enjoy God's indwelling, and as she has set apart this day for its devout consideration, it may be well to recall to our minds her reasons for so doing.

The Church has thus put forward at the front of all her teaching the doctrine of to-day, not arbitrarily, nor because it is revealed ever so plainly in particular texts, (just as the doctrine of baptism or of future punishment is revealed in particular texts,) but because it lies at the root of the whole scheme and plan of redemption. It is that which makes every other truth DIVINE truth.

It shall be my endeavour, with God's blessing, now to show this—to show, that is, that the doctrine of Trinity Sunday does not come before us classed with a number of other truths, some of which may be of first consideration, some of second; but that it comes before us as the sustaining, pervading, crowning, truth of all. I say that the Church lays the solemn stress which she does upon this truth, because it is the foundation of the whole Christian building—the rock, and strength, of the whole Christian salvation.

Christianity, as distinguished from natural religion, if there be such a thing, or from Judaism, is to be found in the New Testament. Now, let us leave for a short time the consideration of particular texts, and glance over in our minds the New Testament. What is it occupied with? what is it all about?

It is entirely occupied with the words and the works of two Divine Persons, besides the works of Him whom we call God the Father. What is the leading feature of the New Testament as distinguishing it from the older revelation of God, or from that revelation of Himself which we find in the works of God? Is it not this, my brethren, that whereas the works of nature reveal to us God, merely as a Creator and Governor, without telling us anything about His person, and whereas the Old Testament brings before us One Divine Per-

son taking an interest in one nation, the New Testament is occupied with the distinct personal existence, the works, and words, of two other Divine Agents, both sharing the nature and attributes and doing the works of God? And these two are the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The New Testament may be divided into two parts—that which has to do with what took place *before*, and that which has to do with what took place *after*, the day of *Pentecost*.

That which has to do with what took place *before* Pentecost is contained in the four Gospels; that which has to do with what took place *after* that day is contained in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles—the book of the Acts being, as its name implies, the doings of the Apostles, and the Epistles being their authoritative teaching.

The whole of the first part of this Divine Book has to do with the person, words, and works of a Divine Being—called the Only-Begotten Son of God, the Word of God, Lord and God. It speaks of Him as being one with God, and as being God, (John i. 1—3, xx. 28;) it speaks of Him as born supernaturally, (Matt. i. 20, 21; Luke i. 35;) as assuming a nature which did not originally belong to Him, (John i. 14;) as declaring the invisible God by His life, (John i. 18;) as speaking the words of God in His discourses, (John iii. 34,)

and manifesting the very power of God by His miraculous works, (John xv. 24.) It speaks of Him as submitting to death, and by His death redeeming the world, (John i. 29;) as giving life to the world by His very flesh, (John vi. 51.) It speaks of Him as being one with God, (John x. 30,) equal with God, (John v. 18,) and yet distinct from God in so far as He is His Son. (John v. 36, 37.)

The whole picture, if we may consider the Gospels as a picture, is full of Him; He fills it to the exclusion of all else. In reading the Gospels we cannot help bowing down our souls to Him, adoring Him with all our souls. He insensibly—rather, He sensibly—commands our worship; we cannot withhold it. Well, He says that He will leave this world and send another to supply His place: this He does; and as the whole of the first part of the New Testament has to do with Christ, so the whole of the second part—that is, from the beginning of the Acts all through the Epistles—has to do with the works of this other Divine Person, the Holy Spirit.

It begins with His descent at Pentecost; it goes on with the account of how He formed the Church, called out and qualified its ministers, (Acts xiii. 2,) in some cases interposing by direct revelation to assign them their particular province, (Acts xvi. 6, 7,) accompanying their words with the testimony of miracles, (Rom.

xv. 19,) and bringing those words home with power to men's hearts.

Do the apostles teach men by sermons? It is by the Spirit. (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Do they instruct them by letter? It is by the same Spirit. (1 Cor. vii. 25—40.) Do they govern the Church? It is by the Spirit. (1 Cor. xii. 1, 4, 28.) Do bad men strive to deceive them? In so doing they lie to the Holy Ghost, (Acts v. 3,) and by so doing lie to God. (Acts v. 4.) The Spirit does all. He divides to every man severally as He will, (1 Cor. xii. 1—31,)—to one He gives the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gifts of healing, to another prophecy, to another government, and so on. And as in the Church, so also in the individual Christian, the Spirit works, renewing and sanctifying, transforming and enlightening, each separate soul.

Think over the New Testament and see if this is not so. Is not the one half full of the person and work of Christ? Is not the other full of the power and witness of the Holy Ghost? Now, of course, by all this we do not mean that in what is said of Christ in the Gospels the Spirit is excluded, or that He works no work till he descends on the Church at Pentecost—or that when the Spirit works after Pentecost, it is a revelation of Himself without Christ.

So far from this, in every step of Christ's work, as delineated in the Gospels, we have the Spirit co-operating; and in every part of the Spirit's work, we have the heart, and hand, and presence of Christ. Thus, at the Incarnation, it is the Holy Ghost who prepares for God's Son an undefiled body and soul, in and by which He may redeem us. As regards His human nature, He is sanctified from the womb by the same Spirit. By the same Holy Ghost He is anointed at His baptism to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of His people. It is through the Holy Ghost that He did His mighty works. By this Holy Ghost, at the end of His earthly career, He offered Himself without spot to God, an atonement for all sin; and by the power of the same Spirit co-operating with His Father's and His own, He was raised from the dead.

So that we see that in all that relates to Christ the Spirit co-operated; and so, after His ascension, when He had quitted in visible presence this lower world, He yet acted in and by the Spirit. Every work of the Spirit has reference to Him; every ray of the Spirit's light shows Him. He sent the Spirit that descended, and He returned by Him to dwell in men.

And so that part of the New Testament which is occupied with the workings of the Spirit is still full of Christ, just as in the for-

mer, though Christ worked, the Spirit co-operated. The Spirit baptizes, but it is into the body of Christ. He illuminates, but it is by making the gospel of Christ to shine into men's hearts. He builds men up, but it is *in Christ*. He makes them partakers of a new nature, but it is that of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. He testifies of Christ. He takes and shows to men of the things of Christ.

The Son and the Spirit bear testimony to one another. The Son bears witness of the Spirit that is to come; tells His sorrowing disciples that because of the Spirit's coming down even His absence will be their gain; promises that the Spirit shall lead men into all truth; promises that through Him the Father and the Son shall take up their abode in men. And the Spirit, too, bears witness, but it is to Christ. It is through His witness that we know that He who came and dwelt among us is God over all. It is through His witness that we know that Christ's blood cleanses from all sin, and that God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself.

Here, then, we have a divine book—the New Testament—embodying what we believe and confess to be God's last and most perfect revelation of Himself; and this whole book is occupied with the work of two Divine Persons, the Son and the Holy Ghost, besides that of the first Divine Person, the Father, to whom

is ascribed the making and governing of all things.

This last and perfect revelation of God is occupied with the work of One called the Son of God, in showing us the character of God by His good and holy life, in redeeming us by His death, and interceding for us in heaven; and also with the work of One called the "Spirit of God," the Holy Ghost, in gathering us into the fellowship of Christ, cleansing our sinful souls, and renewing them in God's image and likeness. Now, inasmuch as we are sinners, this work of these Two Other Divine Persons, the Son and the Spirit, is of as much consequence to us as the very existence we have received at the hands of God, for what, I pray you, is our existence worth except it be in God's favour—and this we owe to the work of God's Son—and unless it be a renewed existence, which renewal (if we have the unspeakable happiness to possess it) we owe to the Third Person, the Divine Spirit?

Now, of course, these Divine works of these Divine Persons, the Son and the Holy Ghost, cannot be revealed to us without calling forth the DEEPEST OBLIGATIONS on our part to such benefactors. And so the New Testament is full of the obligations we owe, not only to the person of our Creator, but to that of our Redeemer, and to that of our Sanctifier.

Because of what the Son of God as our

Redeemer has done for us, the whole Testament is full of what we owe to Him, and how we are to show our thankfulness to Him. Because of what He has done for us, we are called by His name. We are His subjects as our Heavenly King, His servants as our Heavenly Master. No heart's homage that men can pay to the Supreme Being can be greater than that which apostles and holy men are said in God's Word to pay to Christ. And so with the Spirit. By being baptized into His name along with that of the two other Persons, we owe to Him the allegiance, the obedience, the spiritual worship, we owe to the Father and the Son ; and because He is that Person of the Trinity who works more directly on our inner man, we are bid to beware, lest we grieve Him or quench Him. The one unpardonable sin is a sin not against the Father or the Son, but against the Holy Ghost.

Here, then, we have the last and most perfect revelation of God's will entirely occupied with the joint work of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the matter of our present and eternal salvation—*occupied with this to the exclusion of all other knowledge whatsoever.*

Now, then, we can see why the Church has laid such stress upon—why she has fenced and guarded—the doctrine of the Trinity. If the Son and the Holy Spirit are thus (along with the Father) God to us—if they thus work for

us, and in us, the works of God—it is our first duty as Christians to honour them for their work; it is our first duty to ascribe to them the glory of it. If it is our duty as creatures to confess, and worship, and serve our Creator, because He is our Creator, it is equally our duty, as redeemed creatures, to believe in, and love, and adore our Redeemer. And so with our Sanctifier. If He is God working in us, it is a very fearful thing if we do not work according to His working—*i. e.*, in loving response to it.

The doctrine of the Trinity, then, is needful for us if we would observe our first duty to God—if we would, in fact, keep the first commandment with the light shed upon it in the New Testament—for we must believe in God and worship God as He has revealed Himself to us, as God *our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier*.

But the doctrine of the Godhead of the Son and the Holy Ghost is needful if we would believe in the *reality* of the whole work of redemption and sanctification. Consider what the work of redemption is. It is the satisfying eternal justice on behalf of myriads of fallen creatures; it is the raising them up from hell to heaven; it is purchasing them to be the children of God—friends of God—so that they should dwell in the very court of God for ever. And consider what the work of sanctification is. It is

no less than a Spirit recreating, at one and the same time, in God's image, myriads of immortal beings. It is the Spirit doing this, not only by infusing new thoughts and desires into men, but by making them partakers of a new nature,—the nature of the adorable Second Adam now at the right hand of God,—and enlarging and enlightening their minds, so that they should know God to be their adopted Father, and have Him for their temple, their light, their fountain of joy, the conscious home and rest of their souls.

Surely these are divine works—we cannot help feeling them to be such. God, in the Old Testament, has challenged these to be His peculiar works; and so these works lose all their reality and virtue, if they are ascribed to inferior agents, as the Son and the Holy Ghost would be if they were not each of them respectively God. And so they who have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity have never stopped there; they have invariably proceeded to deny or explain away the atonement, the proper priesthood of Christ, and all that is heavenly and supernatural about the work and indwelling of the Spirit, all the grace of the Sacraments, and of the apostolic ministry—in short, everything that makes Christianity of value to sinners.

Their principles naturally lead them to do this; for if there are any works which our reason

tells us would require God for their doer, they are such works of redeeming and sanctifying as we read of in the New Testament.

Such is the Scripture proof of this doctrine, and the reason why we should hold it very fast : let us see to it that we do so. Let us pray God that we may “continue stedfast in this faith.” Let us see to it, also, that we are able to give a reason for this our faith ; and let us see to it that our daily lives show that we believe in the value of the blood that bought us—for it is the blood of the Eternal Son—and may we work out our salvation as those who know that it is no angel or spirit, or created power, but God, even God the Holy Ghost, who “worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

SERMON XXV.

THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD.

JOB xi. 7, 8.

“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?”

ON this day we are called upon to contemplate the great mystery of God in Three Persons—that God is One whilst He is Three, and Three whilst He is One. In the words of the creed that we have just confessed, “There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.” On former Trinity Sundays I have expounded to you the proof of this doctrine as it exists in God’s Word, and I shall consequently not linger upon this part of the subject this morning, but merely very cursorily remind you of the way in which God in His Holy Word commends this great truth to our faith, and then I shall go on to another point connected with this doctrine which seems to demand particular attention at this time.

The proof of the doctrine of the Trinity as it is contained in the Bible is the most satisfactory possible to a candid and humble mind. It is a proof which grows upon us, the more we take God's word in simple faith, and the more we compare spiritual things with spiritual. It is simply this, that everything which can possibly be said of God, as regards His nature and attributes, as regards His working in the world and in the Church, as regards His love, and grace, and mercy, and justice, and power, and eternity, is said of Three Persons equally, not merely of One. In everything that the Bible reveals about God as of moment for us to believe, whether it be the creation of the world, or the setting up of the Jewish dispensation, or the carrying on of God's providential designs, or the coming of the long-promised Deliverer, or the redemption of the world by Him, or the setting up of the Church, or the application to individual souls of the general salvation wrought by Christ,—in all these we have Three Persons co-equally working, so that the salvation of God, no matter how we look at it—whether as the salvation of the world, or the Church, or the individual,—is altogether a salvation in which not One but Three Persons work together, and have glory given to them for doing so. Now all this shuts me up to the doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the creeds of the Church. The salvation of

my soul is to me, as a sinner, the greatest of all possible considerations—it is no less than my eternal well-being. Now, if it were not for the doctrine of the Trinity, I should have to believe, if I believed my Bible, that two other Beings besides my God had a share in every stage of the work of my salvation. I could not help thinking more of such beings than of God—I could not help being closer drawn to them than I am to my very Creator—and led to rely more upon them than upon Him. The result would be, that the more I looked upon my Bible as a message from God my Creator, the more it would be a snare to me; for it would lead me naturally to think more of the work of the Son and of the Spirit than of God. But, blessed be God, I cannot do this; for now I find that the more I honour the Son of God, the more I honour the Father whose image He is, and who sent Him for this purpose, that, in seeing and accepting Him, man might see and accept the Eternal God: and the more I desire and pray for the in-dwelling of the Blessed Spirit, the more I desire the in-dwelling of God Himself in my soul.

So that, in point of fact, the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is put forth in the creeds, is not so much a mystery as the solution of a greater mystery. The mystery is, that throughout the whole Bible the Son and the Holy Ghost should be represented as bearing the names, and sharing the glory, and doing

the works, of the One Eternal God. This is the mystery ; and the only solution of it that I can see is the doctrine of the creed which we have just confessed—"that there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal."

But I must now proceed to that other branch of this subject, which I said at the outset I should mainly consider, as it seems to demand particular attention at a time when a systematic attack has been made on the *mysteries* of our faith, as mysteries, as being inconceivable, and so, in the eyes of those who attack them, incredible. And there is somehow or other a notion abroad that the doctrine of the Trinity is more inconceivable, and consequently makes a greater demand on our faith, and is more opposed to our reason, than any other. Now I want to show you the folly of this; and I think a few simple considerations will serve to make it plain.

We all acknowledge that the doctrine of the Trinity is a great mystery—but how, in what way, is it *great* as a mystery? When we speak of a "great mystery," we may speak of a mystery which is great because it is very inconceivable, very incomprehensible, very unlikely, very contrary to all our ideas of the fitness of things—or we may speak of a mystery which

is *great* because it has to do with a very great Being in a sphere very far above us.

Now, the mysteriousness and inconceivableness (call it difficulty if you like) of the doctrine of the Trinity consists in this, that it has to do with God—the greatest of all beings—a Being so great that, compared with Him, all else is as nothing.

That God is three in Person, whilst He is one in Godhead, is, to my mind, not by any means the greatest mystery, nor the most difficult thing respecting Himself that He has made known to us ; at least, if it is the most mysterious, it is only because it is the highest and best thing respecting Himself that He has revealed to us.

Let us take three other things respecting God, which all must acknowledge who believe in God at all, and see whether they are not just as inconceivable, just as much out of the range of our faculties, just as *confounding*, as the great truth we are now considering.

Let us take the omnipresence of God, and the eternity of God, and His creating power.

And first, God's omnipresence.

All who believe in God at all must believe in His omnipresence—that He is everywhere, watching and upholding in existence everything,—noting and judging every action. Unless God is this, and does all this, He would not be God.

Now, there are eight hundred millions of people living in this world. Only conceive a Being by the side of each one among these myriads, keeping each one of them, alive from moment to moment, watching over him from without, and reading all his thoughts, pleased or displeased with each one according to his particular state of mind and heart, keeping, too, an exact record of all that each one has done or said, and the motives he had for doing or saying it, and doing all this with respect to a present providential plan that embraces every event, and a future judgment that will take account of the whole life of each one. And all this we practically believe and acknowledge every time that we consciously and sincerely put up any one prayer, for the putting up of any one single real prayer from our hearts implies that we believe that God hears us, knows our particular case, and distinguishes us among the multitudes who in every corner of the world are similarly looking to Him. Why, my brethren, we feel that if all our energies were taxed to the uttermost we could not really watch over and take account of the words and actions of any one of our fellow-mortals in this perfect way. And yet here is a Being, the very first idea of Whom is, that He is taking notice in this perfect way of all that goes on in the world, and in every soul in the world. But this is but a small part. The telescope

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reveals to us that there are worlds upon worlds larger than ours, some of them, it may be, teeming with life adapted to their condition. Well, God is in all these, be their distance from us ever so great, just as much as He is in our world. God is with them, or they would not keep their places and observe their stated revolutions, for it is folly to suppose that any law would of itself bind brute matter. You who have to do with laws know well that it is not enough to make a law unless the sovereign be virtually present to make men observe the law; how much more must this be true of senseless matter!

But neither is this all. You will not, of course, if you are at all a thinking person, imagine that we are to judge of God's omnipresence as if it were a mere matter of size or largeness—as if God were more in a large place than He is in a small one—as if there were more of Him in this church, because its dimensions are great, and less of Him in the sister church of Chilton, which is not a tenth of the size.

No, wherever God is, there He is wholly and perfectly. He is altogether in every place by His individual presence just as much as we are altogether in any one spot in which we may happen to be. He is Himself personally about, around, and in, everything that He has made.

Now, all this is, if we apprehend it, quite as much above us as the doctrine of the Trinity, because it is quite as contrary to our confined and limited nature. It is in direct opposition to one of the first principles of our existence, for the first principle of our existence is that we are in space, and so we must be at one time in one particular spot and in no other. We cannot possibly be personally and individually in more places than one; and yet here is the Being of beings, the One with whom we have most of all to do, who is at one and the same moment personally and entirely everywhere and in every place. Now, I say, this is far more confounding to me than the doctrine of the Trinity. When I say "confounding to me," I mean that it makes me, when I think of it, shrink far more into myself, and feel far more my utter nothingness. There is nothing in my own being that corresponds with it, that answers to it. I am, by my very nature, so confined to one place at a time, that I cannot approach to a conception of the way in which God is wholly in every place at the same time. And yet, this is the very first truth that I know and realize respecting God. It is the very first truth respecting Him that I have to do with, for unless He is omnipresent how can He hear me when I pray? How can He be my Judge? How can He judge me and all my fellows righteously, unless He knows

our thoughts, and words, and actions perfectly?

Let us now leave this, and pass to the consideration of the eternity of God. Who has not at times thought of the eternity of God, that God has always lived, that He has had no beginning?—who has not thought of this, and shrunk from thinking further, feeling that it is a depth to look into which makes the soul giddy and ready to fall from its place?

To think that we may, in imagination, multiply ages upon ages, and add to them what we please, and do this for centuries, and yet, at the end, that we should still be no nearer to understanding God's eternity—and all this a matter not of speculation but of fact. That there is an Ancient of Days, a God from everlasting, is as certain as that there is a God at all.

Now, I put it to any reasonable man whether it is not as hard to conceive of God's existing from eternity, as it is to conceive that He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—three Persons and One God? It is really harder; for in the matter of the Trinity we have many things to help us to form a conception, though an inadequate one, that such may be the nature of the Godhead: whereas, in the matter of God's eternity, we have absolutely nothing to assist us to imagine how God can have lived from everlasting, how He can be self-existent. There are many analogies, comparisons, or

resemblances, in this lower world, which help us to apprehend or receive the truth that God may be in one sense Three; and in another, One. Daily do we recognise two, three, or more persons to be *one*—one in point of law, one in the eyes of society. Husband and wife, for instance, are one in heart, one in interest, and one in flesh. Then we have each a three-fold being of body, soul, and spirit, all together making the one man; and those who are conversant with the Christian Fathers tell us of many other comparisons by which they endeavour to make a way for the reception of the truth respecting the Trinity. These comparisons, of course, are each and all very inadequate to *explain* the nature of the mystery; and if we were so to use them, or any other human comparison, they would infallibly mislead us, but still they may help us to *receive* a truth which we cannot understand.

But to help us to apprehend God's eternity and self-existence, (which are the same thing,) we have absolutely not one analogy, idea, or comparison to help us. It is a sheer adamant cliff, against which the waves of human thought may surge for ever, and not displace one fragment.

And so with God as the Creator. It is certain that God made the worlds, for it is certain that the worlds could not make themselves: and yet, if we were to think for ever, we could

not imagine the way in which God has made any one single thing out of nothing. Look, for instance, at the pillars of this church. How did God make the substance of the stone when there was no substance out of which to make it? And yet He must have at one time done so. You may put back the creation as many millions of years as you like. This will not help you in the least; it is only removing the difficulty one step back. Whether He made them ten millions of years ago, or whether He made them six thousand, is all the same as regards the mystery of their having been once made out of nothing.

Here, then, are three mysteries of God, of which mysteries by the first terms of our existence—because we are what we are—we cannot even approach to the solution — ay, and not even to any real conception of them.

Because by our very nature we can be only in one place at a time, we cannot imagine how God can be in every place, and by every person, at one and the same time—because we received our being as yesterday, we cannot apprehend how God has lived from all eternity—because we require materials to work upon, we cannot approach to the conception of God making all things, or any one thing, out of nothing.

But we all believe all these things of God. We all believe that He is omnipresent, eternal,

and the Creator, or we should not believe in God. We could neither pray nor trust if we did not believe these things of God. We should have no GOD.

There is nothing in us, then, to help us to understand or even receive God's omnipresence or eternity—for in these things there is nothing in common between us and God. God has made our minds such that we cannot imagine how any being can be personally at one and the same time in a thousand different places, so that we literally can neither understand, nor even imagine, the way in which God is everywhere present. There is nothing, I repeat, in ourselves or our fellow-creatures to help us to do so.

But it is far otherwise with that great doctrine of GRACE and LOVE, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. We have within us that mutual love, that love of kindred—kindred flesh or kindred soul—that paternal and filial love, and above all that shrinking from solitude, eternal and undisturbed loneliness, which at once brings the truth of there being Three Persons in the One Godhead home to our hearts. Of all the truths of the Godhead, it is the one which comes to the heart—that is, if we realize the Bible statements respecting it—for it teaches us that there is in the Godhead everlasting love. There is in the Godhead the Father loving the Son, because He is His Son,

His Express Image, the Full Inheritor of His every perfection, and so in every way and altogether worthy of His love. And there is in the Godhead the Son loving the Father, because He is His Father. So that God shares in the love wherewith we love one another; and when a father and mother love the child to which they have imparted their own human nature, their love is the faint echo of the Divine love—that is, of the love wherewith the Divine Father has loved from all eternity that Divine Only-begotten Son to whom He has from all eternity imparted His divine nature. Yes, when we think of the words, “God is love,” our minds must not rest in that love wherewith God has loved us worms. We must rather raise our thoughts to those other words: “The Father loveth the Son.” “This is My beloved Son.” “The Only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.” “I love the Father.” “I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” (John v. 20; Matt. iii. 17; John i. 18, xiv. 31; Prov. viii. 30.)

God did not begin to love when He began to create angels or men whom He could love; He loved from everlasting. His love is as everlasting as His existence: for from eternity there was Father, Son, and Spirit loving One Another in the Godhead. Now, these words touch a cord within us. They come home to the hearts of fathers and

sons. They show that the God who is beyond all power of thought above us, if we look to His omnipresence or His eternity, has yet a something in common with that which He has put within us. God has given us the power to love. We can love one another—and so, though we cannot apprehend the mystery of the Trinity, we can yet, after our feeble measure, apprehend the Persons of the Godhead loving one another; and so love—human love—the love within us, even though it be feeble and transitory, is a help to us to apprehend a Trinity in which is the Father loving the Son, and this Father and this Son loving the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost the Father and the Son.

And in another way are our hearts drawn, as it were, to the doctrine of the Trinity, and prepared for its devout reception.

There is nothing that draws one heart to another so much as the sight of self-sacrifice.

Now, if we hold aright the Catholic Faith respecting the Trinity, we see self-sacrifice, we see the giving up of self in the very Godhead, for we see God the Father parting with His Son, and we see God the Son giving Himself up to suffer—not doing His own will, but the will of His Father—not seeking His own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him. And the Holy Ghost glorifies the Son. He speaks not of Himself, but of the Son, to whom He bears witness.

When we see humility and self-surrender in another, we are sensibly drawn to him in whom we see it—and so we are drawn in heart to the Son of God, who glorifies, not Himself, but His Father; and to the Holy Ghost, whose one work it is to witness, not to Himself, but to the Son.

And this is Scripture teaching. It is by seeing the love that there is in the Godhead, and the honouring of One Another that there is in the Godhead, that we learn most *effectually* that there are three co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead.

My brethren, if these things are so, then what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness—we, that is, who have been baptized into the name of this Father, this Son, this Holy Ghost—we, who have so often joined in prayer that “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,” may be with us all? How ought we to see that this high and blessed truth has not been revealed to us in vain? It has not been revealed to us in vain, if, “through Christ, we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” It has not been revealed to us in vain if we “pray in the Holy Ghost, and keep ourselves in the love of God, and look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

SERMON XXVI.

MIRACLES.

ST. JOHN X. 25.

“The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.”

IN these words our Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews, that the miracles which He was continually working before their eyes showed plainly that He came to them with a message from God.

There are men now, who call themselves Christians, who are saying that a miracle under any circumstances is incredible—that it is contrary to that reason which God has implanted in us as our guide in all matters both of religion and everyday life, to believe that God ever interferes with those laws of nature which He has established. But these men, as I said, are professing Christians. You will ask, then, on what grounds do they believe in Christ at all? They say, in answer, that we are to believe in Christ’s words, or in certain of His words, not because He did wonderful things to prove that His words are true, as He says expressly in my text, but

because we have a sort of moral sense and verifying faculty within us to which His words appeal, and to which they commend themselves. So that, in the end, it comes to this, that we are ourselves, each one for himself or herself, the judges of what we are to accept as the words of Christ and of how far we are to accept them.

If certain words in the Bible seem to affect us for the better, or appear to be calculated to do so, they are the words of God to us. If they are not verified by that which is within us, (whatever it is,) to which they are supposed to appeal, or if they appear contrary to our educated judgment or conscience, then we are at liberty—nay, a sacred necessity requires us—to explain them away.

Now, instead of all this, Christ Himself plainly declared that His words were to be believed, not merely because they commended themselves to men's consciences, but because they were sealed by His miracles. And if you think for a moment, you will admit that it must be so, for it is quite plain that though some of our Lord's discourses and sayings at once come home to the conscience, and commend themselves to that sense of right and wrong that God has implanted in us, others do not—do not at once, I mean.

Let me explain what I mean by two examples.

When our Lord says, "Whatsoever ye

would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them," He says a thing that needs no miracle to enforce its reception. The more we think of such a precept, the more we see how admirably it meets every complication of life—how, if it was but steadily adhered to, almost all the evils of society would disappear or be greatly alleviated.

But it is vastly different with such a saying as "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die;" or that other saying, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

To say "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them," requires no credentials; but for the same Man to rise up and say that "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth," requires that He should show that He has authority from the Maker of all things to say such a thing, for the Maker of all men alone can remake them after their bodies are dissolved.

Well, we look into Christ's discourses and we find that they are full of things that no man can possibly call upon his fellow-men to believe unless he have the most sufficient credentials to confirm his words. Christ by no

means confines Himself to saying things which commend themselves to the conscience, which appeal to our natural sense of virtue and vice, right and wrong, good and evil. He says at every turn things which demand our faith, and make a very great demand upon it. When He says "I and the Father are one," "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father"—when He says that His "life is to be a ransom for many," that "no man cometh to God, but through Him," that He is the "True Vine," that His flesh is "meat indeed," that certain bread which He brake is "His body," and that He hath "life in Himself" and "quickeneth whom He will"—it is quite clear, I say, that when He says these things He says the most astonishing things respecting Himself, and His relation to God, and what He came into the world to do.

It is only to be expected, then, that if Christ said such things, and expected men to believe in Him—nay, laid down that men were to be saved from everlasting destruction by accepting Him and believing His words—it is only to be expected that He should do something to prove to His brethren that He had a right to say such things, that His words had a demand, not only on their respectful attention, but on their submissive faith. Well, we have a fourfold record of His life, which must have been written by those who knew Him and

saw what they related, or at the dictation of those who had seen all.

This account tells us that, in order to enforce His claims, He did things which no man could do unless the Lord of life and death had expressly given Him the power to do them; for He suspended at His pleasure every law of life and death.

Just as He said things respecting Himself that no man had ever said of himself, so He did things such as man had never done before, to show that He had a claim to be believed in whatever He might say. Did He say, for instance, that He is the Resurrection and the Life, and that whosoever believeth in Him, though He were dead, yet shall He live: the words were scarcely uttered by Him before He raised up a dead body. And in the course of a few days He raised Himself from the dead, after having been put to a cruel death in the sight of a whole city.

Did He say that He was the bread of life, and that to have life in us we must eat His flesh, only just before He had fed a vast multitude with a mere handful of provisions:—provisions totally insufficient to give a full meal to His twelve followers were miraculously multiplied, so that they more than supplied upwards of five thousand persons.

Now, let us put these few things that we have said together.

It is one thing for a Man to teach His fellow-men goodness and righteousness, and another thing to say that He will ransom them by His death and raise them from their graves after they are dead. The one, the teaching of righteousness, may be left to itself to win its own way in the world; the other, the claim to redeem from sin and the grave, must have something to support it or prove it. God would never send a Man into the world to say that all men must believe in Him as the redeemer of their souls from sin, and their bodies from the grave, with nothing more than the man's own bare word for it. And so we have far more than Christ's mere word; we have the evidence of His mighty works.

What is the leading feature of the record of Christ's life? Unquestionably its miraculous, its supernatural character. For three years our Lord goes about in the most public way—preaching to crowds of people, confirming His preaching by signs and wonders worked under the scrutinizing gaze of bitter enemies, in the thoroughfares of populous towns, and in the most public resorts of the metropolis of a kingdom. He ends this miraculous life by a public death, and after this death rises again, as the confirmation of all He had said, and is seen alive after His death by between five and six hundred people.

Such are the leading features of the history,

and they are miraculous—so very much so, that if it could be proved that in half the cases recorded the narrators were mistaken, and took certain natural appearances for miracles, or allowed their fervid imaginations to impose upon their reason, still what would remain would be more than sufficient to establish all our Lord's claims, or else to brand His biographers as the most shameless inventors or hardened falsifiers of facts that ever lived. For throughout the history the writers bring into the utmost prominence the supernatural features of it. Three of them set out with our Lord's Incarnation and Birth, as being purely miraculous, an interference on God's part with the natural laws of generation and birth of the most astonishing kind. Then the accounts of the ministry of this same Person are full of one thing—that He possessed the power of healing men, in a single moment, of diseases which the most skilful medical treatment would take weeks and months to alleviate, and that He was always industriously exercising this power. And they all conclude with the fact that, after having been publicly put to death, He rose again from the dead; and such stress is laid upon His resurrection, that the witness to its reality is the one characteristic of their teaching, and seems to include or imply all else that they were commissioned to teach and preach. It is called

THE GOSPEL, as I showed in my sermon on Easter Sunday.

It is clear that the writers of the Gospels, and its first preachers, believed that our Lord did all those wonderful things that they have recorded. It is clear, also, that they believe that He did these things in the way that they have recorded—that is, by certain special, arbitrary, visible exertions of Almighty power interfering with the natural laws of life and death—and that He did them for the purpose which they have recorded, viz., the establishment of His claims to say certain very great things respecting Himself and His future kingdom, which He could not call upon men to believe except upon overwhelming proof that the God of all had empowered Him to say what He did say.

We now come to consider the questions—Is their record to be relied on? Is there the stamp of truth upon it? or did they attempt to deceive their fellows, and set up a new religion on the credit of false miracles, or false accounts of miracles which were never wrought?

There is one stamp of truth upon their narrative which nothing can invalidate, which is, that whilst they record the most glorious things respecting another, they record the most humiliating facts possible respecting themselves.

Throughout the whole narrative, they give the utmost prominence to their own unbelief, ignorance, timidity, vain-glory, false expectations, and presumption. And then, as to their attempting to deceive by a false account, we must remember that it was just as hard to invent such a story then, and make any number of people believe it, as it would be now. The age in which Christ lived was not a barbarous age, but a highly civilized one. The people living at that time were as sharp at detecting a fraud as they are now. The history of the time is perfectly well known—indeed, much better known than the history of many later periods.

There were living at that time, or a little before and after it, some of the greatest writers of antiquity. What we call a liberal education consists mainly in an acquaintance with the writers who lived in the four or five centuries before Christ, and those who wrote about His time or a little after it. And for the next three or four hundred years after this time, the Gospel won its way amongst races of men far more intellectual than the British nation now is, or, very likely, ever will be.

You are not to suppose that because an event is said to have taken place a long time ago that therefore there must be a greater uncertainty about it than about matters said

to have taken place more recently. On the contrary, you may trust the men of such an age as that in which Christ came, and the ages immediately succeeding it, that they would no more allow themselves to be imposed upon than you would, especially in the case of such a matter as the religion of Jesus Christ. For the religion of Jesus Christ at once cuts at the root of all selfishness. It is a religion founded by a self-denying, holy, pure Man, who told His followers that those who would come after Him must deny themselves and take up their cross. It is a religion that allows of no exaltation of self. It begins by renouncing all human merit and all dependence on the creature. All pride, whether of intellect, or of birth, or position, is directly contrary to its letter and spirit. It proclaims "that not many mighty, not many learned, not many noble are called." For two centuries it made little use of the literature and philosophy of the heathen—rather disclaimed all alliance with them, and rejected their aid. It proclaimed that the most unlearned peasant, with faith in God's promises, was far better in God's sight than the most learned philosopher without the same faith. It exposed its first followers to bitter persecution, often terminating in death, and it gave them nothing of this world in return. You may depend upon it that no people would accept such a system at

random, on no evidence, or on insufficient evidence of its truth; you may depend upon it that our carnal nature—that that spirit of self-seeking and self-exaltation which all men alike possess in some shape or other—would lead them to scrutinize just as much in the first and second centuries after Christ as they would now, if such a thing were now first presented to their notice, the miracles by which such a religion was authenticated. And yet all history tells us that this miraculous story of the Gospel steadily won its way. It steadily won its way amongst the Greek race and those nations that wholly or partially spoke its language and imbibed the spirit of its poetry and philosophy. Now these races were, as I said, far more intellectual, far more cultivated, far more acute in controversy than the English are. They would detect a flaw in evidence quite as soon, and a fallacy in reasoning ten times as soon, as an Englishman. And to embrace the Gospel they had to account as unclean and devilish a national religion whose myths were preserved and adorned by the poems of Homer, and they had to account as unsatisfactory and erroneous the speculations of such men as Plato and Aristotle; at least, they did so.* This race—the first in arts, in literature, in philosophy, in history, that the world has ever seen—consented to put all this aside for an ac-

* See Chrysostom on St. Matthew, Hom. i. 10.

count, written with no pretensions to human learning or literary skill, of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

You may trust the men of those days, and of such a race, my brethren, that they would never have allowed themselves to be imposed upon by such a story as that of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, without evidence. They would never have surrendered all the glories of their national history, the beautiful visions of their national poets, and the deep utterances of their national philosophers, for the account of a crucified Jew given by four persecuted countrymen of His, who wrote in a dialect at once barbarous and ungrammatical, and in a style having no pretensions to eloquence, and with not a single philosophical term in their history from one end to the other.

Such men would never have given up all that they as nations boasted of for the four Gospels, if the four Gospels had not come to them in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

But did they as a race, as a people, thus give up all.

In proof that they did, I ask you to compare the state of public opinion among them at two different times—and we will take St. Paul's time as the first of these, and just about four hundred years after as the second.

Look at St. Paul, at Athens, on Mars Hill,

proclaiming Christ to those who professed to lead public opinion in his time—preaching Christ, that is, to men who mocked at a resurrection, and were in doubt about a future state—and then look at the representatives and successors of both the one and the other a few hundred years after, at the Council of Ephesus.

Look, I say, at the philosophers of St. Paul's time, not certain whether there is a God, not sure whether there is an hereafter, in doubt about the soul's existence after death, mocking when they heard of a resurrection, and then look at the disputes which distracted the representatives of these very men after a few centuries. Instead of the controversy then being as to whether there was a God over all, the dispute was, as to whether it was fit and proper to call the Virgin Mary the mother of God because she was the mother of the crucified Nazarene? So deeply ingrained, that is, had the true and proper divinity of the crucified Jesus become in the minds of the most advanced and intellectual nation of the world, that the leaders of thought then disputed, not as to the being of a God, not even as to the divinity of the blessed Jesus, not as to His divine mission, or the miracles which He wrought—all such things were taken for granted; they had passed out of the region of dispute into the region of acknowledged certainty—and the point then discussed was,

whether the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the poor despised Nazarene had been from the first so perfect and indissoluble that His mother, being the mother of One, in all respects, God over all, was therefore to be called the Mother of God.

And what were the things, close upon this, that agitated men's minds and divided them from one another? Why, such things as whether the Divinity of our Blessed Lord was the thinking principle within Him or whether He had a human soul as well—whether He had two wills, a human and divine will, or whether He had but one.

Do not suppose for a moment by what I am saying that I am vindicating the Church for having brought these matters into such public dispute, or that I am defending the tone or spirit in which the disputes were conducted. I am merely adducing the fact that such things then shook not the Church only, but the world.

It is a very noticeable fact in the history of human thought, that the philosophers—the leaders of that thought—should, at the time of St. Paul, be uncertain about the being of God, and that a few generations after those who inherited the place and influence of these philosophers should receive all the dicta respecting Christ's Divine nature of the Nicene Creed; a minority objecting to one syllable.

And it is very noticeable that when Jesus of Nazareth was preached, the world of human thought should be uncertain about the future state, and that a few generations after the world of thought in the very same countries should adopt the conclusions in theology of one man, and that man St. Athanasius.

Now I know and I can imagine but one reason for so astounding a change, and that is the miraculous testimony to the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

I know no principle that can explain the fact of the subjugation of the civilized world to the Nazarene but this, that the religion of the Nazarene had credentials that the very men who rejected it could not disprove; and first and foremost among these credentials were the miracles by which it was at first commended to men's notice. Christ professed to rest His claim upon His miracles. So did His immediate followers. These claims were urged upon a people far more able than we are to investigate such claims. That people were subdued by the evidence of these claims and by nothing else.

I mean, of course, *humanly speaking*, for into the question of the operation of the Holy Ghost in producing faith I do not now enter.

And now, my brethren, in conclusion, what is this religion which the Son of God came down from heaven to teach you, and which

He commended to you by the Gospel miracles, and at the last sealed by His Resurrection? What does it reveal to you? and do you, in your hearts, believe what it has revealed? It has revealed to you much respecting God, and much respecting your own hearts, and much respecting the eternal world.

It has revealed to you much respecting God, that He is a creating, a sustaining, and reconciled Father, a redeeming Son, a sanctifying Spirit. Do you so believe all this as to look to Him as a child does to its father? Do you so believe in the Person and work of His Son, as to love Him sincerely for what He has done for you,—as to plead His merits, ask for His intercession, take up His cross, and wait for His coming? Do you so believe in the Person and work of His Spirit as to desire and pray for the working of His full sanctifying power within you, so that you, whosoever you are, (as believe me, is your privilege, if you have turned to God,)—so that you “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement?”

This revelation has made known to you much respecting your own hearts, that they are exceedingly deceitful,—oh! do you distrust them?—and yet it has told you that these hearts are works of God, and capable of renewal, and so you can glorify God by them, and God can reign in them.

This revelation makes known to you an eternal life—that God will keep your soul and risen body alive as long as He lives—even for ever and ever.

Do you, then, know Him Whom to know is life eternal?

NOTE ON SERMON ON MIRACLES,

CONTAINING

EXAMINATION OF SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS.

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SINCE writing the foregoing sermon, I have read a tract on Miracles in a well-known series.\* It is entitled "Signs of the Kingdom of Heaven," and as it is apparently written for much the same class of persons as my sermon is written for, and as the conclusions of the writer are directly opposed to mine, I purpose to examine some of his statements. I do this mainly for the purpose of showing the utter futility of endeavouring to meet half-way those who object to the signs and wonders recorded in the New Testament, as interfering with the order of nature. The sacred narrative so insists upon the evidential character of the miracles recorded in it, and gives them such prominence, that its doctrinal teaching and history must be accepted or rejected together. It will also give me the opportunity of answering some popular objections which could scarcely be brought forward in a sermon to a mixed congregation.

The first statement which I shall examine, the reader will find in page 18 :—

"Any conversion or adhesion to His cause which rested rather on the impression produced by superhuman power, than on the acceptance of the truth in the heart, was studiously repelled by our Lord Himself. This most remarkable fact is illustrated, as might be expected, in St. John's Gospel more than in the other three."

Again, in page 15 :—

\* Tracts for Priests and People.

"An adhesion produced by mighty works was not what Jesus desired."

I confess I was startled by these assertions as being so directly contrary to the impression one receives from reading St. John's Gospel, which contains, amongst others, the following direct statements of our Lord:—"I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." (Chap. v. 36.) Also, (chap. x. 25, 37, 38,) "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works." Again, (chap. xv. 24,) "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

But it may be asked, Were the above works mighty works or miracles? Certainly. Our Lord, who reproved the Pharisees for their ostentation, would never have put forth mere acts of public or private virtue as His credentials.

The writer, in proof of his assertions, brings forward three instances from St. John, which I shall examine.

First, he alludes (p. 14) to the case of the multitudes who pursued our Lord with the intention of making Him their temporal king or leader, (John vi. 15,) and whom our Lord undoubtedly "*repelled*," simply because His kingdom was "not of this world." But a more unfortunate illustration of the writer's position that "an adhesion produced by mighty works was not such as Jesus desired," could scarcely have been selected, for we read in the same chapter, (v. 26,) that Jesus remonstrated with these very same persons, after they had taken shipping and pursued Him to the other side of the Galilean lake, in these words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth."

Hardly less to the purpose is the writer's second illustration:—

"After His repulse of the common people at that first Passover, Nicodemus, 'a ruler of the Jews,' came to Him, confessing that an impression had been made upon

him, also, by the mighty works of Jesus. This confession is immediately met by the declaration that the kingdom which Jesus was come to establish was a *spiritual* kingdom, and was to be entered not through wondering at mighty works, but by a new birth of water and of the Spirit." Page 15.

To a reader unacquainted with the circumstances, the impression from the above would be, that our Lord almost shut the door upon this "wonderer;" whereas, on the contrary, to no one single soul did He vouchsafe such an abundant revelation of the deep things of His kingdom. When one thinks of the great things revealed in the few verses of this conference, one is tempted to question why our Lord should have vouchsafed so much to a man who had not the courage to come and inquire of Him in the light of day.

The writer's third illustration (p.15) is also, when examined, directly contrary to his theory, that our Lord studiously repelled adhesion produced by mighty works. It is that of the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum. (John iv. 43, 54.) Here we have a man of precisely that temper of mind which the writer accuses the defenders of miracles of having; for he needed the reproof, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Here, then, was an opportunity for our Lord to have shown that He did not desire the adhesion of one who would not accept His unattested word. But how did He treat this man? Why, He performed the miracle and it had the desired effect, for the issue of all was, "himself believed and his whole house."

The next illustration also breaks down. The writer's words are:—

"Once more, when the multitude asked Him for a sign to attest (in modern phrase) the revelation which He brought from heaven, in the words, 'What sign showest Thou, then, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat,'—Jesus gave them no sign, but spoke to them of a spiritual bread," &c. So far the writer.

But why did Jesus give no sign? Because He *had* just before given an amply sufficient sign to these very men, viz., the miraculous multiplication of the bread. He gave no sign because He *had* given one. He did not play with His signs. He acted in the matter of signs according to His own precept, "not to cast pearls before swine."

In connexion with this we may take our Lord's dealing with the Scribes and Pharisees alluded to by the writer, page 13:—

"They record His deliberate refusal to work signs for the gratification of His townsmen, or for the convincing of the Pharisees. (St. Matt. xii. 38, 39; xiii. 58, &c.)"

Well, I turn to Matt. xii. 38, 39, and I find there that, so far from our Lord absolutely refusing a sign, He promised one far greater than those He was then working. He said that they should have but one sign, but that was to be the mightiest of all—the sign of the prophet Jonas—even His own resurrection. This sign, too, was confirmed to the rulers by the testimony of their own soldiers, and to the whole evil and adulterous generation by the copious Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the miraculous gift of languages with which it was accompanied—performed in the sight and hearing of the teeming multitudes then assembled at Jerusalem, and instrumental to the efficacious conversion of three thousand.

The writer's next statement shall be one in page 14:—

"The disciples who first attached themselves to Jesus were not persuaded to receive Him as the Messiah by a display of supernatural works. They were directed to Him by their master the Baptist, who told them that he had seen Jesus pointed out to him by a sign from heaven, as the One greater than himself, of whom he had previously spoken to his followers; but it was through personal intercourse with Jesus Himself that they learnt to believe in Him. (i. 35—51.) After a while, He wrought His first sign to manifest His glory to these His followers; and the effect of it was a deepening of their faith."

It appears, then, that the primary faith of those apostles who first attached themselves to our Lord depended on the faith and consequent testimony of the Baptist. How, then,

did the Baptist believe on Him? Was it through Christ's words or teaching? No; for Jesus had not yet begun to preach, but the Baptist's belief rested on a sign—the most stupendous *sign* that ever was vouchsafed to a child of Adam. The Holy and undivided Trinity manifested themselves to his senses. He heard the voice of God the Father, and he saw the Holy Ghost descending in a bodily shape, like a dove, to point out to him that He whom he baptized was God's own Son.

On this testimony of the Baptist the earlier-called disciples accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but, be it remembered, with the most indistinct notions possible of what was involved in their thus accepting Him. They accept Him without attaching themselves to His person; and it was only some time after they had witnessed the miracle of Cana, and (if we are to suppose that St. Luke (chap. v. 11) gives the right sequence of events) after the miraculous draught of fishes, that they "forsook all, and followed Him."

But the original eleven were not all the apostles. There was another, St. Paul, with whose life and acts we as Gentiles have more to do than with those of all the rest. Surely the assertion of the writer, "an adhesion produced by mighty works was not what Jesus desired," does not fit the case of him who was suddenly arrested in his career of rampant unbelief by the visible appearance of Jesus in glory!

And now with respect to St. Paul, and the Gospel he preached, and its credentials. On these matters the writer hazards two or three statements which, for truth's sake, I hope that in any future edition of his tract he will modify or explain. He asserts (page 26):—

"We do not hear of marvellous works being done at Athens, at Corinth, or at Rome."

Indeed! Pray, what is the meaning, then, of St. Paul's assertion in his second letter to the Church at Corinth? (Chap. xii. v. 12.) "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds." What, again, is the meaning of the allusion to the miraculous gifts as exercised amongst them, including in the catalogue miracles, gifts of healing, and speaking with tongues? (1 Cor. xii.)

Again, when he wrote to the Church of Rome, not having yet been there, he spoke in his letter of the "Gentiles being obedient by word and deed through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Ghost . . . from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum." Is it likely that he who wrote in this way would do no such things when he came among them lest they should adhere to his Master through seeing them, as their fellow-Gentiles had all done: taking also into consideration that he "longed to see them, in order that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift," (Rom. i. 11)—in all probability a miraculous one. And now with respect to St. Paul at Athens, the writer says:—

"We may fairly ask men to receive such a message as St. Paul delivered at Athens, or at Rome, before we press them to make up their minds respecting miracles."

Will the writer turn to the account of St. Paul at Athens, in Acts xvii., and he will find that the message which St. Paul delivered to the Athenian "*savants*" concludes with a call to repentance based on the one grand miraculous fact of the New Testament, the Resurrection of Jesus.

If we are to ask men to receive St. Paul's message to the philosophers of Athens, we are to ask them to receive as **THE GOSPEL** the account of a miracle which was not only in itself an astounding infraction of the order of nature,—i.e., of the law of life and death—but which also stamps as equally miraculous and supernatural the conception, birth, and whole career of Jesus Christ.

What an absurdity, then, to accuse us, as the writer does in page 32, of attempting "to impose miracles as if by Divine authority upon the faith of men," and of "thrusting into the background the true Word of God, the Gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ," when the Scripture account of the Gospel itself is simply the truth of a miracle: for what does St. Paul call the Gospel—his Gospel which he preached, which his converts had received, in which they stood—by which also they were saved? (1 Cor. xv. 1—8.) No other than Christ's atoning death, burial, and resurrection. This is the one burden of his preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, and at Athens. This was so peculiarly the Gospel

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of the apostolic times, that in it is sometimes included the whole apostolic testimony, as in the words "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts iv. 33.)\*

Now, I hope, in what I am going to say, that I am not misrepresenting the opinions of my brethren, but it does appear to me that a certain school amongst us have departed grievously from the expression of that form of sound words in which God the Holy Ghost has seen fit to embody "The Gospel." They seem to me to have practically laid it aside for some vague expression of the universal Paternity and benevolence of God, just as another school has laid it aside for such expressions as "Jesus is able and willing to save you." Both these expressions are true. God is the Father of all, and He loves the world. Jesus is able and willing to save every sinner; but I repeat again, neither of these is the formula under which the Gospel is presented to us by SS. Peter and Paul. St. Peter says, (1 Pet. i. 21,) "God raised Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." St. Paul says, in his last letter to his son in the faith, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to My Gospel." (2 Tim. ii. 8.) This departure from the form of the Gospel given us in the New Testament is, I am afraid, very disastrous in both the cases to which I have alluded. We may be sure that we cannot improve upon God's mode of stating His own truth; and when we come to give the matter a moment's consideration we see clearly how dangerous it is to do so, for the resurrection of Jesus—the Gospel of the apostolic age—is not the proof or pledge of the benevolence or general Fatherhood of the Deity only. St. Paul, in his address to the Athenian *savants*, does not treat it as a pledge of God's mercy only, but also of His judgment. "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath chosen, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

\* So also, (Acts i. 22,) "Must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection?" Also such appeared to a heathen to be the leading point of their preaching. (Acts xxv. 18, 19.)

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a pledge that God will not only fulfil all His promises in Christ, but all His threatenings by the mouth of the same Christ. It is a pledge that God will visit the finally unbelieving with a punishment that makes "both the ears of everyone that heareth it to tingle," because the unbeliever has flung in God's face the mercy that would have restored and renewed him.

I pass on to one or two other statements of the writer.

"These powers of healing—which in some rare instances went so far as to recal the dead into life—were only put forth in the sight of those who had faith." (Page 7.)

One scarcely knows how to characterize such a statement as this. The only excuse for it can be that it was written in extreme haste; for does the writer mean to say that the healing of the man sick of the palsy, recorded in Matt. ix., took place only in the presence of those who had faith, when a number of the bystanders were saying in their hearts, "This man blasphemeth?" The very first miracle recorded in St. Mark is done in the sight of a whole synagogue of people, evidently (from verse 27) not believers. This is also the first miracle recorded by St. Luke.

Was the miracle of raising from the dead the widow's son at Nain done only in the sight of believers? Were believers only the witnesses of the Pentecostal sign?

Another statement which I shall examine is this (page 10):

"The philosophical conception of a miracle, as an interference with the laws of nature, is entirely absent from the New Testament books. The works of Christ were wonderful, and such as no man could do unless God were with him, in the eyes of the disciples; [yes, and in the eyes of the Jewish Rulers too;] but they never thought of discriminating between what was in accordance with nature, or contrary to nature, or above nature, in the works which they beheld. No line is drawn, or attempted to be drawn in the New Testament, between the works which might have been done by eminent human skill and power and works which were necessarily superhuman."

One would imagine, after reading the above, if one knew nothing of the New Testament, that it was full of philoso-



phical distinctions and of such terms as "laws of nature," "physical phenomena," &c., whereas the writer knows that there is not a single strictly philosophical term or distinction in it from one end to the other. The laws of nature are never for a moment recognised. There is no such expression in the Bible, for there are, strictly speaking, no such things. What are improperly called the laws of nature are simply the rules according to which God reproduces certain forms of vegetable or animal life, or the proportions according to which He combines certain elementary atoms, or the forces counteracting one another according to the measure of which He Himself continues the worlds which He has made in their various spheres, or paths, according to His ordinances.

According to our Lord, the lilies do not grow—the birds are not fed—by a law of nature; but "God so clothes the grass." "The fowls of the air; your heavenly Father feedeth them."

But the sacred writers *do* discriminate between what is in accordance with nature and what is above nature. They do it expressly in the case of the woman with an issue of blood, (Luke viii. 43;) she "had spent all that she had upon physicians." There was the natural way of healing by human skill. "Immediately her issue of blood stanch'd." There was the supernatural power. They do it in the case of the miraculous draught of fishes. (Luke v. 1—10.) "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." There is natural ordinary labour. They enclosed a great multitude of fishes, "so that their net brake." There is the miracle. Again, in the case of the miraculous multiplication of food. "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient." There is the natural supply. "They did all [5000] eat, and were filled." There is the superhuman power. As to saying that "no line is drawn, or attempted to be drawn, in the New Testament, between works which might have been done by eminent human skill and power, and works which were necessarily superhuman," the writer knows that no such works of Christ as the former are recorded. Our Lord never administered any drugs, He never operated as an oculist now does, He never employed any apparatus of

any sort, and He never used scientific means to restore suspended animation ; and so no comparison could be instituted, no line could be drawn between such things (which I suppose are what the writer means by "works done by human skill") and His miracles.

The above observations will serve to show how utterly impossible it is if we retain the historical parts of the New Testament, to blink or thrust into the background the "evidential" character of the miracles.

I shall now proceed to a statement which will bring a still more important aspect of the controversy under our notice. In page 1, I read :—

"Miracle-worship betrays itself in the operation of the following principles :—It sets forth violations or suspensions of the laws of nature, as the ultimate grounds of our belief in a Divine Lord and Saviour of men. It magnifies such violations or suspensions as more divine than the laws of nature themselves."

I am afraid all true believers in the Eternal Son of God must plead guilty to the latter of these. We do, indeed, magnify ONE violation or suspension of the laws of nature as more divine than any law of nature. We do, indeed, set above all law, whether of matter or of mind, that suspension of the law of conception and birth with which the New Testament opens—that suspension of law whereby one truly and properly Emmanuel came amongst us. We do believe that the Incarnation is far above nature or its laws, for it is "A NEW CREATION." It infinitely exceeds the old creation in the manner in which God brought it about, for the old creation was brought about easily by the mere word of God—the new creation was brought about painfully by God humbling Himself.

The new creation, then, is a work of God, *sui generis*. The manner in which God brought it about, and its issues, are above all law of created things. The things concerning it cannot be measured by any standard but their own. In bringing it about, God acted as it were anterior to law, just as, in the act of making the old creation, He made matter, and

assigned to that matter the law according to which it was afterwards to live, or move, or have its being.

The old creation had become decayed by sin, which in some mysterious way had affected its whole being, and God in His infinite goodness determined to renew it. God ordained that the beginning of this renewal should be in the midst of the old state, and so there was a suspension of the order of the old state, to the end that the new order in Christ might be inserted or grafted into it.

Now all this will serve to show the real place and use of the Gospel miracles. The author is continually insinuating that we "worship miracles"—"we wonder at miracles"—we "demand of men faith in miracles." Now, if by miracles the writer means the mighty works done by our Lord anterior to His resurrection, I say we do no such things.

In the sermons on miracles that I have heard, or that I myself have preached, the evangelical aspect has been always insisted on, to the almost exclusion of the evidential; but if the writer includes amongst miracles the Resurrection, then I assert, that if he does not himself insist upon this as God's own seal to the truth of all that Christ claimed to be, he does not act according to his commission as a preacher of the Gospel.

No sensible believer "wonders" at our Lord's miracles, because all his wonder is absorbed at the power and grace displayed in His incarnation and humiliation. We demand of men no faith in such miracles as "the turning of the water into wine," because we ask them to believe in the incarnation and resurrection of Him who turned the water into wine. But when a man stumbles at such a miracle as that of Cana, because he says it is an infringement of natural law, we are naturally, and I believe not needlessly, concerned about the state of his soul; for we cannot do his common sense the injustice of supposing that he can exercise any real faith in the miracles recorded in the first and last chapters of the Gospels, and yet withhold his belief from those he reads in the intermediate ones.

One word with respect to the import of the miracles: the writer says, page 46, "When we have learned to regard the miracles of Christ as interpreting rather than suspending

the laws of nature." Now can the writer really think that our Lord walked on the water, or turned it into wine, to *interpret the laws of nature!!* What holy humble soul has ever so learned Christ, or ever will? We must suppose that, by the laws of nature, the writer here means the benevolence of the Deity, &c.; but granting him this, I do hope and trust that the generality of Christians will always learn something more from these works of Christ than they are supposed to learn any day from a walk in the fields.

I hope and trust that many, very many, learn from them the laws and principles of the new creation—the kingdom of God upon earth. What does the requirement of faith before Christ can do the miracle teach but this great gospel law, that we receive God's good things according to our faith? What do we learn from the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, but the grace flowing from Christ's person? What does the miraculous draught betoken, but the catching of men in the Gospel net? and so on. Not that these exhaust the meaning of the several signs; but such things as these are assuredly the keys to them.

I now come to a part of the subject which I have deferred to the last, because of its practical importance.

The whole tract throughout is an apology for miracles, or rather, perhaps, for God's revelation as containing such things. He says, in the first page:—

"I desire to justify to the uttermost the narratives of the New Testament as historical and authentic against the doubts which have been cast upon them."

In page 3, he says, "It ought not to surprise us as an unreasonable demand on the part of the inquiring spirit of our time, that we should *justify*, if we can, the miraculous narratives of the Bible."

Again, page 5, "Now the only hope for the Scriptural narratives is, that they will *justify themselves*."

The line that he takes to accomplish this, *as far as I can understand it*, is this, that our Lord did not insist upon mere believing on Him because of His miracles, but because of His words; that His miracles were acts of condescension

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the then prevailing ignorance and superstition, and that the evidential character of His miracles was very subordinate to their teaching aspect. Still, after all, the fact that the narrative is full of these miraculous accounts is not denied. Now let us consider who the persons are who *require* this apology—for whose benefit does he thus justify miracles? They are men imbued with the “inquiring spirit of the age.”

“If those narratives,” he says, (page 8,) “are to appeal to minds interested in the knowledge and the practical life of the present day, as conveying simple historical truth, it seems inevitable that anything in them which implies a suspension of the laws of nature should excite a feeling partaking more of repugnance than of admiration.”

Again, “That which is more wonderful to intelligent men than any isolated fact is the harmony which is found to prevail in all the departments of the universe.” Again, “Such persons are always sure, that when the truth is ascertained, it will be found to reveal not a violation, but a more subtle fulfilment of order.”

Again; these persons are supposed to rejoin, when they are asked to receive the Scripture narrative:—

“Hardly any evidence would persuade us of the real occurrence of anything so unnatural as a miracle; we take the liberty to disbelieve the eyes of other men when they tell us they saw one, for we would not believe our own.”

Throughout the tract these worshippers of order and harmony are supposed to occupy the vantage ground; they are treated with tenderness and consideration, whilst the defenders of the truths of the Gospel are “miracle worshippers” and what not.

The objections which they are made to urge are terse, neat, epigrammatic, whilst the answers to them are verbose, mystified, and long-winded. Nay, in one place, if we are to believe our eyes, it is assumed that these persons have so excellent a temper of mind that it will be accepted as if they had openly professed the name of Jesus.

“We may rejoice to think,” the writer says, (page 46,)

"that homage has been often paid to Him when His name has not been spoken by the lips. The humility and teachableness, the devotion to truth, the freedom from baseness, the admiration of order and beauty, which characterize the true scientific mind, are, in essence, a worship of Him in whom the just, and wise, and loving God is revealed to men."

And this, though St. Paul has written, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x.)

Never for a moment, that I can perceive, is it hinted that the unbelief of these "intelligent persons" may arise from moral causes, as our Saviour invariably implies that unbelief in His time did. (John iii. 21; v. 44.)

Now let us see as to the security of the position which these persons are assumed to take. Do they stand firm on their pedestal of elevation? Their scientific investigations or their inquiring spirits have revealed to them such order and harmony throughout the universe that they can imagine no reason why this order should ever be suspended. *Is there, then, this order in nature?* How about the department of HUMAN nature? What sort of harmony reigns there? The world with which we, as human beings, have to do is not the world of geology, or of astronomy, or of animated nature, but of man.

"The proper study of mankind is man."

Here, then, is an excellent order pervading every department of creation except ~~THE~~ department which crowns all. The nature for the sake of which all else exists is fearfully disordered, disorganized, degraded, by sin—by moral evil. Now it is just this utter disorganization of human nature—the nature of the being for whom the world was made—which is the "apology" for the miraculous in Christianity.

The world had become a moral chaos, and God interfered. He interfered in order to make Himself known—to reconcile—to renew—to strengthen—and we have the record of this

interference in the Bible. Now let us see whether this will not fully meet the objection of the writer's philosopher.

“‘Why should I be compelled,’ a philosopher may naturally plead, ‘to receive as the proper and ultimate credentials of a revelation of truth, given eighteen centuries ago, things which, in the nineteenth century, we should all agree to regard with suspicion and dislike?’” (Page 4.)

Because, Mr. Philosopher, eighteen centuries ago, under the teaching of *savants* like yourself, men who thought at all were in doubt about the very being of a God, and men who did not think degraded God below the brutes in their worship.

Because, eighteen centuries ago, the great Physician of souls, pitying this frightful state of things, interposed with the remedy; but just as a skilful physician of the body has often to break a limb before it can be reset, so the great Physician of man's soul saw fit to break through a lower or natural order, that He might bring in a higher or heavenly order. It is to this higher order, oh philosopher, that you owe all that you boast of. If God had not then interfered you would have had no more certainty about God and heaven and goodness than the savages in the woods. All the outlines of the ideal phantom that you parade against Revealed Truth you owe to the book which passes by learned distinctions and philosophical terms for the genealogy and birth of Jesus, the star in the East, the flight into Egypt, the baptism in Jordan, the forty days' fast, the temptation by a personal Satan—and such things. Come down, then, from your pedestal, philosopher, for He whose words you profess to admire as heaven's utterance has said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

When this philosopher asserts that we *all* agree to receive with suspicion and dislike accounts of present miracles, he should be told that well-informed Christians who are guided by their Bibles receive these accounts with suspicion,

not because modern miracles interfere with the order of nature, but because they are *always* adduced to prove something additional to, or perhaps contrary to, that one all-sufficient Revelation once for all given eighteen centuries ago. The next miracle that *we* expect to see is the *sign* of the Son of man in heaven. If, by God's Almighty grace, we look for this, we shall be abundantly fortified against any miracles, whether false or real, natural or diabolical, with which, if we are to adhere to Christ's words, some future great deceiver will assuredly shake the faith of Christendom. What the present worshippers of order and harmony—those who for order and harmony's sake reject the Scripture miracles—are to oppose to Him whose coming will be with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, I know not. May God grant that they may not be then miracle worshippers! They have rejected the miracles of Christ as infractions of nature's order—they see with their own eyes infractions of nature's order that nothing but supernatural power will account for, and they fall down and worship. (2 Thess. ii. 10.)

To conclude. When men talk about not receiving the credentials of God's message of mercy because the order and harmony which they observe around them was thereby interrupted, they should be reminded of their own disorder.

They should be warned that man's moral disorder, in which, if they truly examine themselves, they will find that they have part, should make them very, very humble critics of a plan of salvation such as ours. The very order with which their examination of the rest of God's works makes them conversant, should make them catch at, rather than coldly criticize, a scheme for rectifying such a state of disorder as that of which the moral nature of their own species is the victim.

#### THE END.





PUBLICATIONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR ON THE  
PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMAL  
REGENERATION ON PURELY SCRIPTURAL  
GROUND.

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THE SECOND ADAM AND THE NEW  
BIRTH;

Or, The Doctrine of Baptism as contained in Holy Scripture.

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—*Extract from Preface.*

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"Their [the advocates of revision] present line of argument is to make as little as possible of the alterations they propose; a 'few words' the Bishop of Gloucester desires to omit; slight modifications are all that the author of the recent article in the *Edinburgh Review* wishes to obtain. But the truth is, as the writer of an admirable tract [Mr. Sadler, 'Doctrinal Revision'] on the subject has shown, that a few words would be useless for removing objections which lie against the whole principle on which the Services are constructed. He proves that this principle has been distinctly accepted by the greatest names in the history of the Church of England, and that an alteration of the terms in which it is expressed would be to contradict their uniform and harmonious teaching. The *Edinburgh Review* would have it believed that reactionary changes of the Prayer-book in the seventeenth century introduced for the most part the objectionable passages. The writer of the tract explains the fallacy of the Reviewer's allegation."—*Guardian*, February 20th, 1861.







